



DARK NIGHTS

DEATH
METAL

1

THE LAST 52 WAR OF THE MULTIVERSES



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DARK NIGHTS
DEATH
METAL
THE
LAST 52
WAR OF THE MULTIVERSES

The end is here: after killing Perpetua, the Darkest Knight has made his final move, bringing with him the most horrifying, most twisted opposition to fight on the field of battle for control of everything in creation. Now every being left in the Multiverse—heroes and villains alike—must stand together in the ultimate showdown. Wonder Woman leads the heroes, Superman leads the villains, and Batman leads the dead... everyone has their part to play in the final war for all of existence. Whatever the outcome, this will be the end of the DC Universe as we know it!

WONDER WOMAN in FIGHT!

JOSHUA WILLIAMSON, SCOTT SNYDER Writers DEXTER SOY, SCOTT KOBLISH Artists
VERONICA GANDINI Colorist TOM NAPOLITANO Letterer

SUPERMAN in FIRST & LAST MEN

MAGDALENE VISAGGIO Writer PAUL PELLETIER Penciller
NORM RAPMUND Inker ADRIANO LUCAS Colorist CARLOS M. MANGUAL Letterer

BATMAN in THE BATMEN WHO LAUGH

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MATT HOLLINGSWORTH Colorist ROB LEIGH Letterer

THE ATOM in UNSTABLE ATOMS

KYLE HIGGINS Writer SCOTT KOLINS Artist
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LOIS LANE in NO MORE SUPERHEROES

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EMILIO LOPEZ Colorist TOM NAPOLITANO Letterer

RAVEN in FALLING THROUGH THE CRACKS

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CHRIS SOTOMAYOR Colorist TROY PETERI Letterer

THE PENGUIN in APICIUS

MARGUERITE BENNETT Writer INAKI MIRANDA Artist
EVA DE LA CRUZ Colorist CARLOS M. MANGUAL Letterer

JOHN CONSTANTINE in ARMAGEDDON BLUES

MATTHEW ROSENBERG Writer ROB GUILLORY Artist
MARISSA LOUISE Colorist ANDWORLD DESIGN Letterer

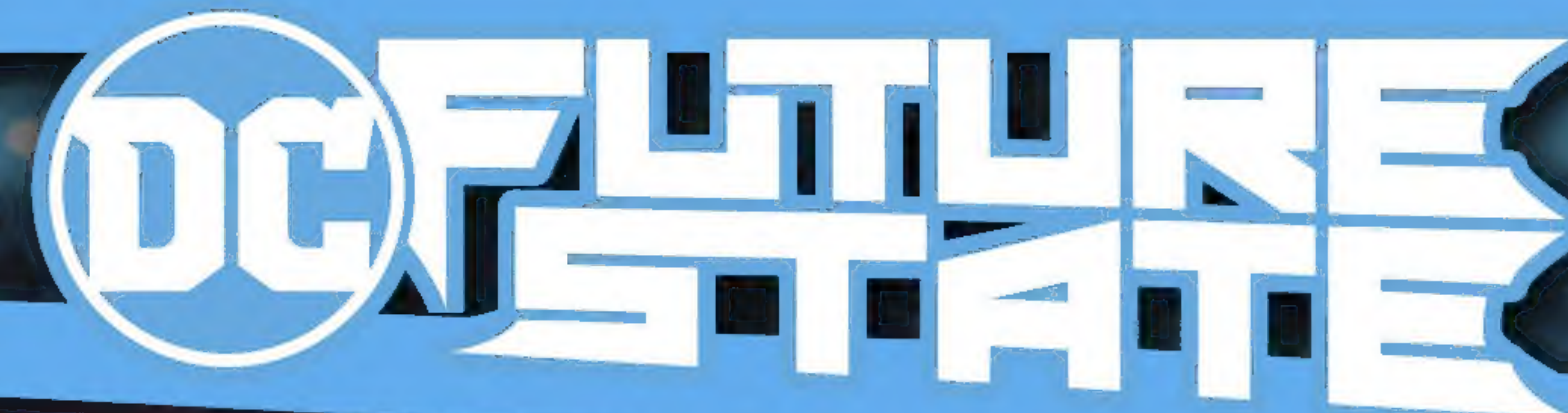
SWAMP THING in REIGN OF THE SWAMP KING

JUSTIN JORDAN Writer MIKE HENDERSON Artist
ADRIANO LUCAS Colorist DAVE SHARPE Letterer

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SUPERGIRL based on characters created by JERRY SIEGEL and JOE SHUSTER.
By special arrangement with the JERRY SIEGEL FAMILY.



THE NEXT BATMAN

HUNTED BY THE MAGISTRATE!

Written by Academy Award winner **JOHN RIDLEY**
Art by **LAURA BRAGA**

#3 includes **OUTSIDERS** and **ARKHAM KNIGHTS** bonus stories
#4 includes **BATGIRLS** and **GOTHAM CITY SIRENS** bonus stories

64 PAGES



THE DARK KNIGHT MUST SAVE THE MAN OF STEEL FROM A POWERED-UP PROFESSOR PYG!

Written by
GENE LUEN YANG
Art by
BEN OLIVER
and **SCOTT McDANIEL**

THE ORIGINAL BATMAN MEETS THE NEXT BATMAN!

Written by
MARIKO TAMAKI
Art by
DAN MORA

#3 includes a **GRIFTERS** bonus story
#4 includes a **RED HOOD** bonus story

48 PAGES



**DISCOVER THE DESTINY OF THE
DC UNIVERSE!**

#DCFutureState   

FEBRUARY

THEMYSCIRA.

IT STARTS WITH A MEMORY,
FROM DAYS LONG BEFORE.
DAYS OF PEACE.

MOTHER,
CAN I LEAVE?

I WANT TO
PRACTICE WITH
THE LASSO. IF
I'M GOING
TO--

HUSH,
DIANA.

TODAY WE HONOR THE
GREATEST OF AMAZON
WARRIORS.

WHO IS
SHE?

HER NAME IS AELLA. IT
MEANS *WHIRLWIND*.
AND SHE LIVED UP TO
THAT NAME ON THE
BATTLEFIELD.

SHE LED
OUR SISTERS IN
A GREAT BATTLE
AGAINST HERCULES
LONG AGO.

LIKE THAT
STATUE IN THE
GARDEN OF
HEROES?

THOSE WERE
HER ALLIES, HER
SISTERS, HER
FRIENDS, HER
LOVES.

THEY
ALL FELL.
ALL BUT
HER...

NOW SHE CAN
BE WITH THEM
AGAIN?

MAYBE THEN,
FOR HER, DEATH
ISN'T ANYTHING
BAD.

MAYBE IT'S A
BLESSING?

NO!

DEATH IS
NO BLESSING!
IT'S HORRIBLE!
HORRIBLE!
FIGHT, YOUNG
ONE!

"FIGHT!"

THE HELLSCAPE. FORMERLY THEMYSIRA.

ONE WHO
LAUGHS!

YOU
WANT TO FIGHT
SOMEONE...

...I'M
RIGHT
HERE.

LOVE
THE NEW LOOK,
WONDER WOMAN.
GOLD IS VERY
IN.

BUT YOU
KNOW I WON,
RIGHT?

I DID
WHAT YOU
COULDN'T!

I KILLED
PERPETUA. THE MOTHER
OF ALL CREATION. DIED IN
THE DIRTY ALLEY THAT IS
THIS MULTIVERSE.

AND NOW THE
DEATHS OF YOU
AND YOUR WORLD
ARE JUST THE
ENCORE.





I WENT
TO THE FORGE
OF WORLDS ON A
MISSION TO FIND
A WAY TO STOP
YOU. THE FIRES
WERE DIM.

BUT DOWN
IN THE DARK I
REALIZED WHAT I
NEEDED TO TAKE
YOU DOWN ONCE
AND FOR ALL.

WE ARE ONE
UNIVERSE. IT
ALL MATTERS.

WE ALL
MATTER.

EVEN
YOU!

I'M ALL
THAT MATTERS,
WONDER
WOMAN.

I HAVE
TRANSFORMED
MYSELF FROM A
SAD BOY IN AN
ALLEY TO A
GOD.

A GOD WHO
OVERLOOKS THE
HORROR OF WAR
AND DOESN'T DO
ANYTHING TO
STOP THEM.

WHILE
YOU HAVE
BECOME THE
THING YOU
DESPISE.

LUTHOR
DESIGNED A MACHINE
THAT WOULD FORCE US
TO SEE THE **TRUTH**, BUT
I KNOW THE TRUTH IS
IN ALL OF US, AND
I'M BRINGING IT
TO YOU!

TRUTH?







YOU WERE PROBABLY SAFER NOT BEING A TEEN TITAN.

THAT'S WHY ON MY WORLD, I PUT THEM ALL OUT OF THEIR MISERY!



THEY CALLED ME THE FASTEST KILLER ALIVE!

SEE YA, KIDDIES.



NO!

NEVER

AGAIN!

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM



YOU'RE MY FEAR, AREN'T YOU? FROM A WORLD WHERE WHAT I DID WASN'T AN ACCIDENT. THAT I LIKED IT...



YOU LOVED IT.

BARRY WAS FAMOUS FOR DYING, RIGHT?

HOW ABOUT I HELP YOU BE FAMOUS, TOO?



THAT
WASN'T YOU,
BUDDY. NOT
BY A LONG
SHOT.



THE WALLY I
KNEW WAS A GOOD
MAN AND WOULD
NEVER ACT LIKE
THAT TOOL.

I WAS THERE
WITH YOU, TOO. WE
WERE BOTH HURTING.
SO, I DON'T BLAME
YOU FOR WHAT
HAPPENED.

BUT
WHAT I'M TRYING
TO SAY IS...

...YOU
STILL OWE
ME.



I OWE
A LOT OF
PEOPLE.





HOW ABOUT WE CUT THE GUILT TRIPS AND TAKE DOWN SOME OF THESE UGLY BOY WONDERS!

I'M BEATING YOU TWO TO ONE HERE, KID FLASH!

NEVER CHANGE, SPEEDY!



THERE ARE TOO MANY!



BOYS, YOU FEEL THAT?

MORE AND MORE OF THE BATMAN WHO LAUGHS' DARK WORLDS ARE ON THE HORIZON, COMING INTO FOCUS.

I HATE TO SAY IT, BUT THIS WAR IS ABOUT TO GO FROM IMPOSSIBLE TO HOPELESS.

WE NEED BACKUP! FAST!



YOU CALLED?!



KID FLASH?!

YOU TOLD US TO RACE TO YOU WHEN THE TIME WAS RIGHT.

IT'S OKAY, JESSE. WITH YOU, MAX, AND AVERY JOINING US...



...MAYBE WE CAN REALLY WIN THIS THING!

KEEP FIGHTING!



YOU SEE WHAT I MEAN?

YOU KNOW WAR BETTER THAN MOST, DIANA...

"HOPE ON THE BATTLEFIELD CAN BE A KILLER."

"GAZE UPON THE REALITY OF THIS LAST WAR...AND TELL ME WHAT YOU SEE..."

TELL ME, WONDER WOMAN.

IN YOUR LIFE YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED GREAT WARS, AND AFTER WHAT YOU JUST WITNESSED... WHAT DID YOU SEE?

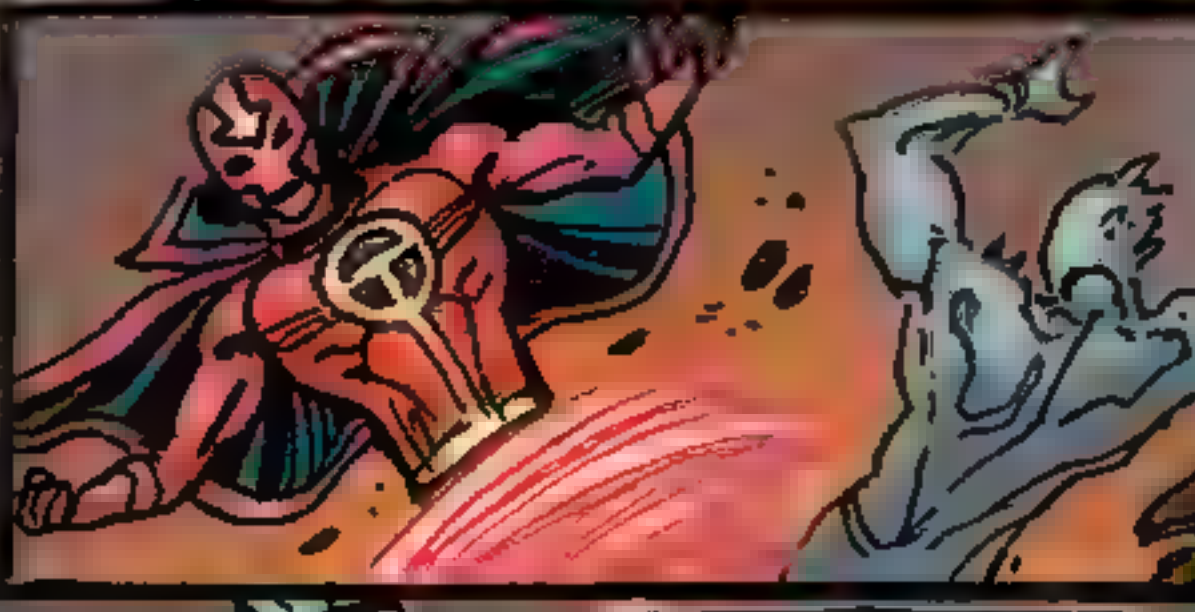
WHAT DO ALL YOUR FRIENDS NOT WANT TO ADMIT?

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ON THE BATTLEFIELD?

THAT WAR... THAT WAR HAS NO HAPPY ENDING.

EXACTLY...

"...AND YET THEY KEEP FIGHTING. HEROES AND VILLAINS WORKING TOGETHER FOR A COMMON CAUSE..."



"...LOOK AT YOUR SISTERS."

"HOW VALIANTLY THEY CHARGE INTO DANGER."




"THEY DO IT IN YOUR NAME, INSPIRED BY YOUR EXAMPLE..."



"...THEY RISK THEIR LIVES FOR YOU."



BARBARA, NO!



OH, CHEETAH
WILL SURVIVE THAT.
IT WAS MERELY A
SCRATCH.

SHE WILL
LIVE JUST LONG
ENOUGH TO WATCH THE
SUN SET ON THE
MULTIVERSE.

AAAH


I WAS
WRONG ABOUT
YOU, DIANA.



YOU
ARE NO
GOD.


GODS
ARE
CRUEL.

LIKE
ME.

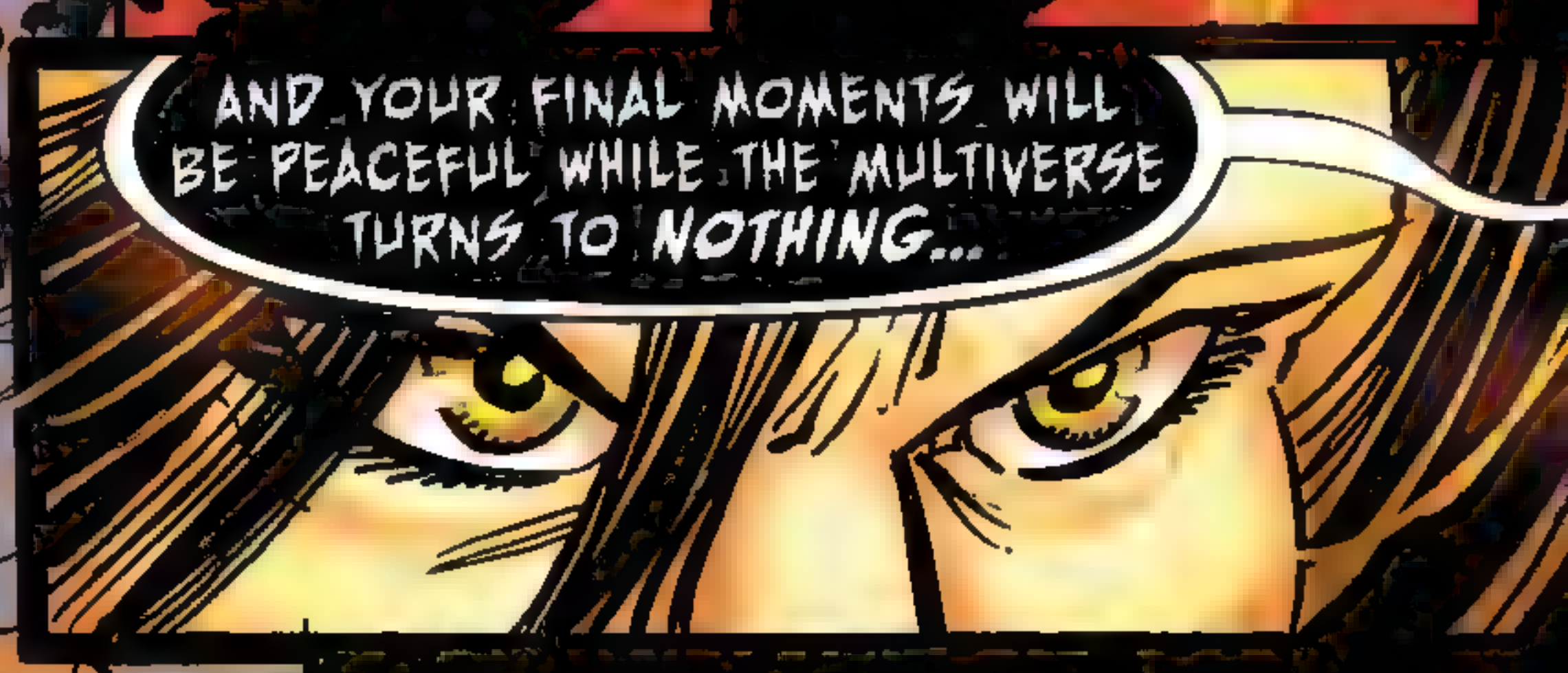


YOU WILL
SUBMIT.

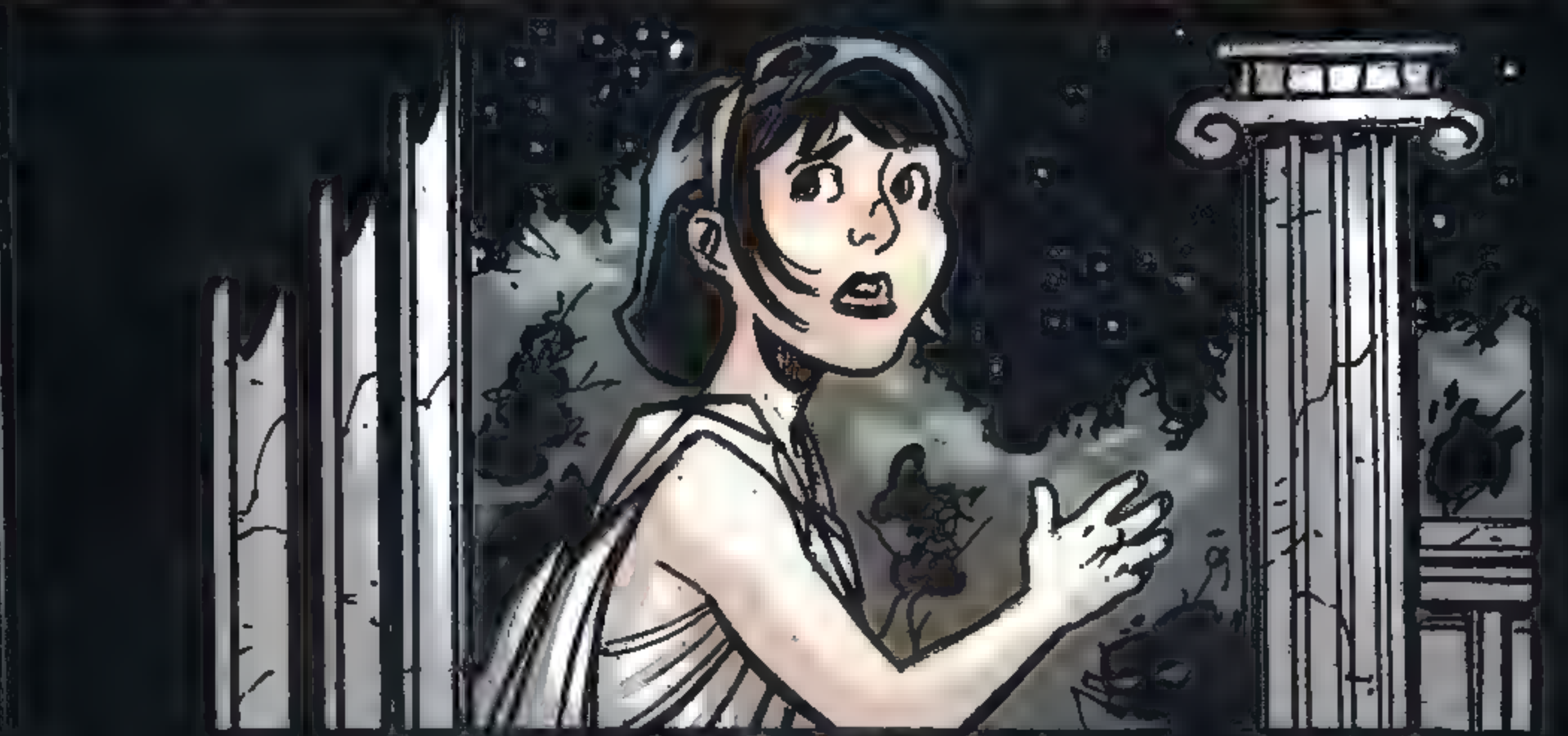
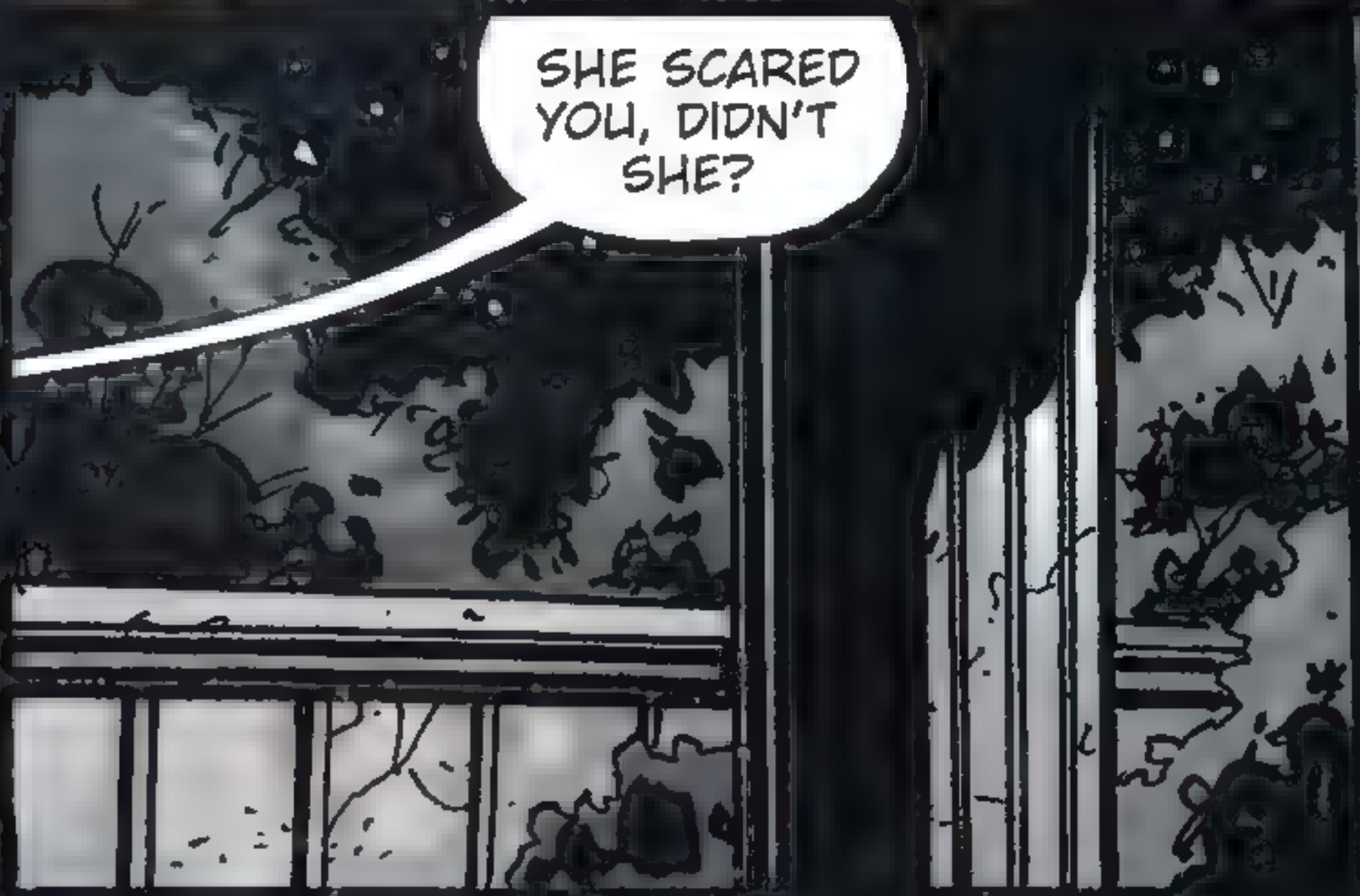
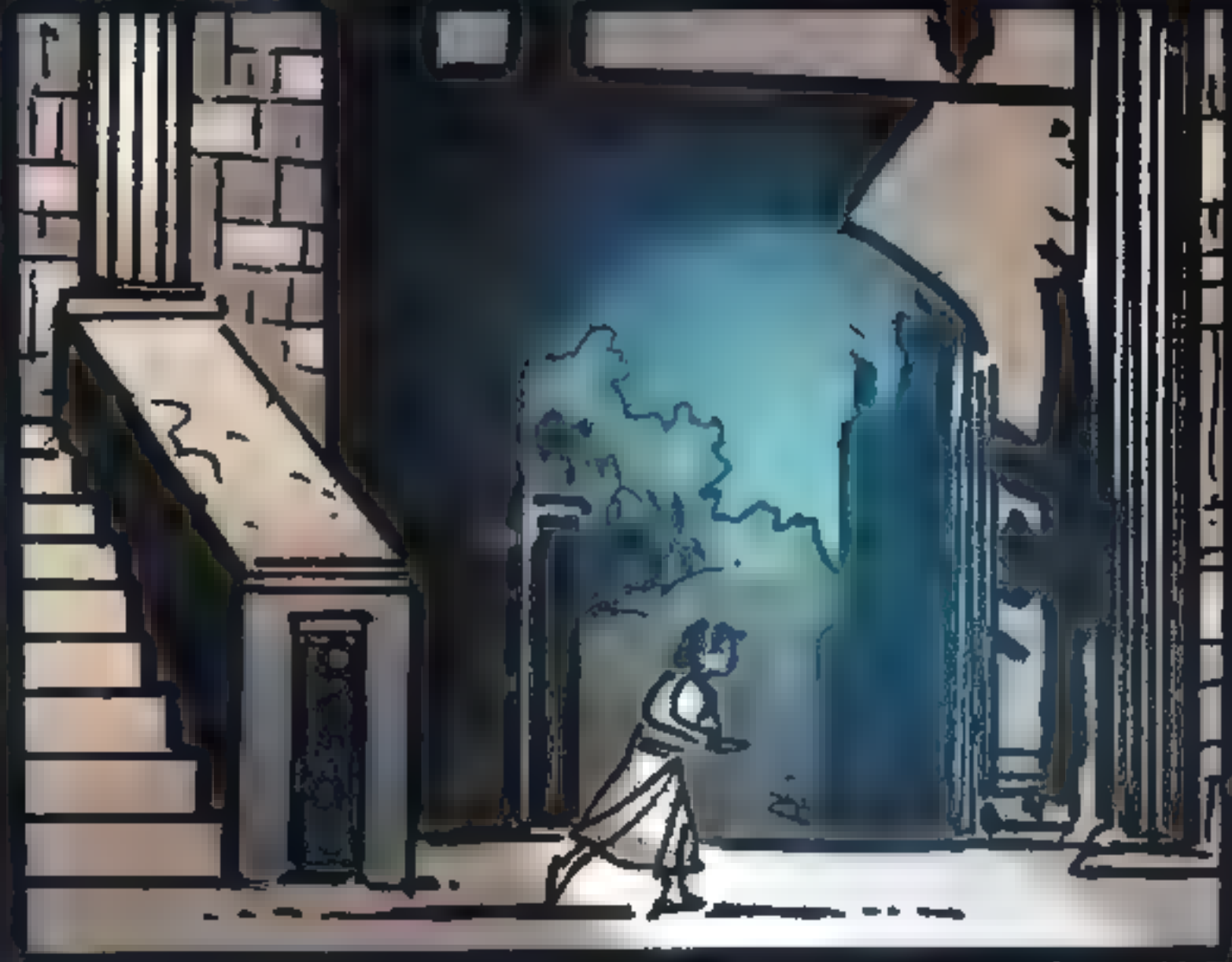
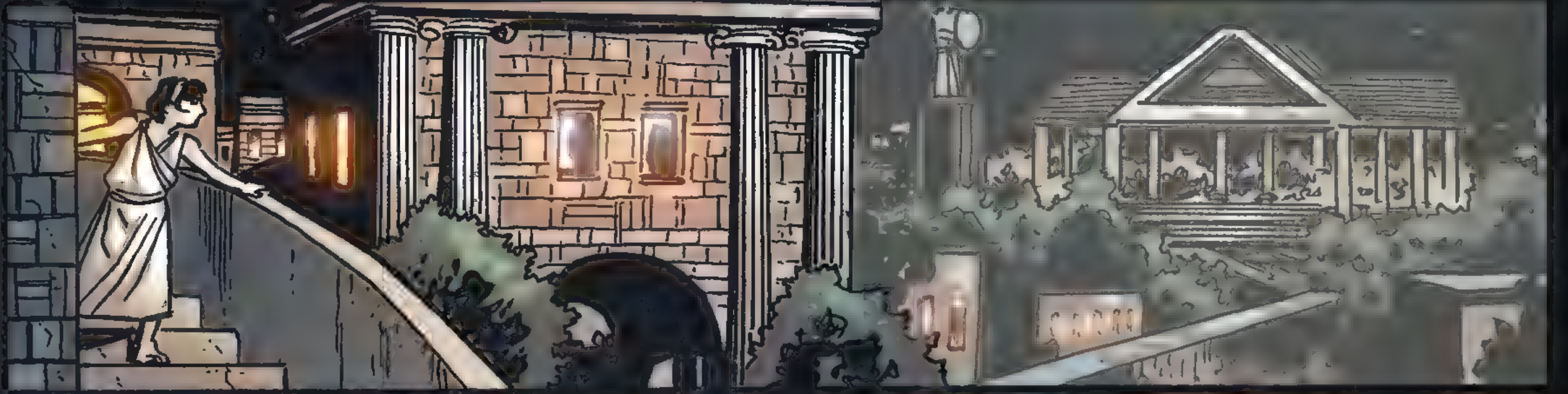
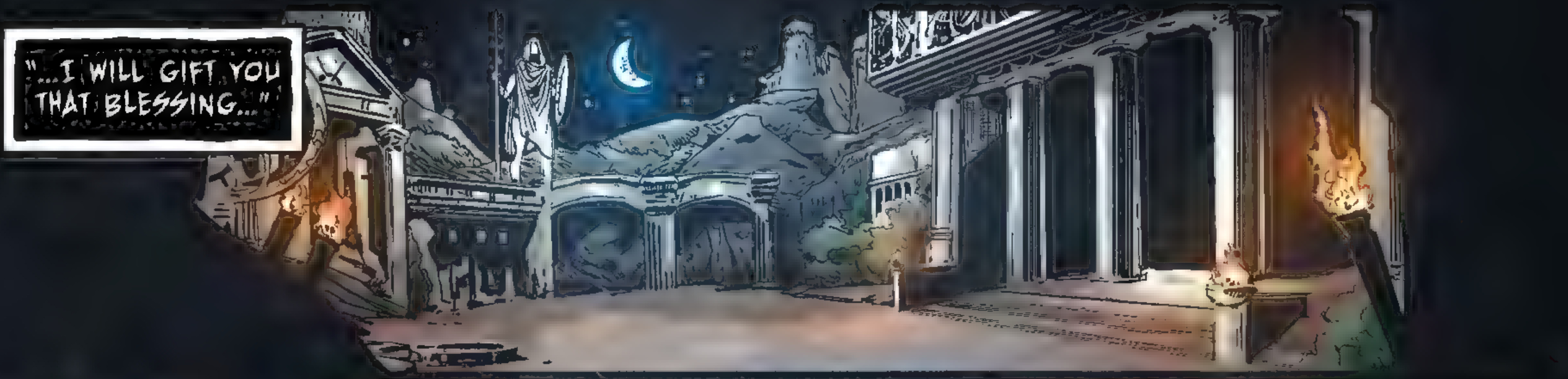
YOU
WILL FALL.
YOU WILL
BEND THE
KNEE.

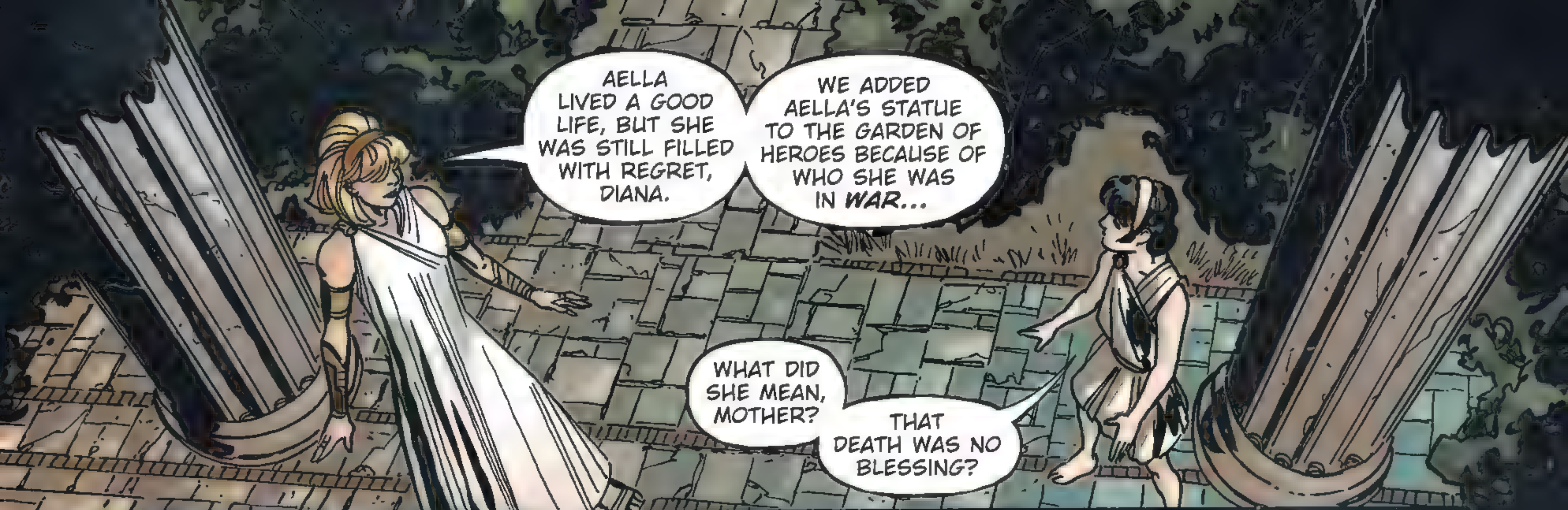


IF YOU ASK ME NICELY,
WE CAN STOP ALL THIS
FIGHTING. ALL THE PAIN
CAN STOP.



AND YOUR FINAL MOMENTS WILL
BE PEACEFUL WHILE THE MULTIVERSE
TURNS TO NOTHING...



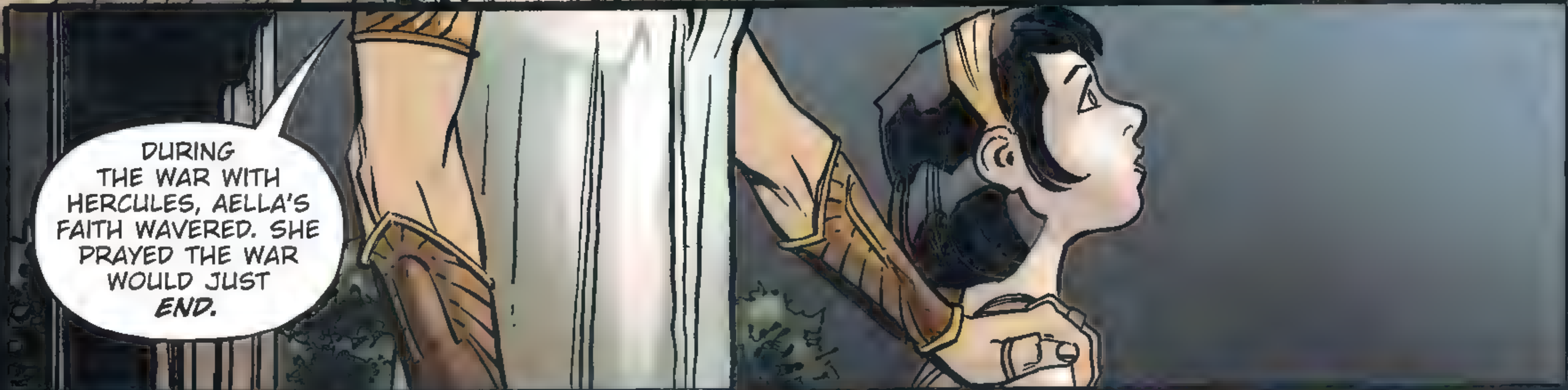


AELLA
LIVED A GOOD
LIFE, BUT SHE
WAS STILL FILLED
WITH REGRET,
DIANA.

WE ADDED
AELLA'S STATUE
TO THE GARDEN OF
HEROES BECAUSE OF
WHO SHE WAS
IN **WAR...**

WHAT DID
SHE MEAN,
MOTHER?

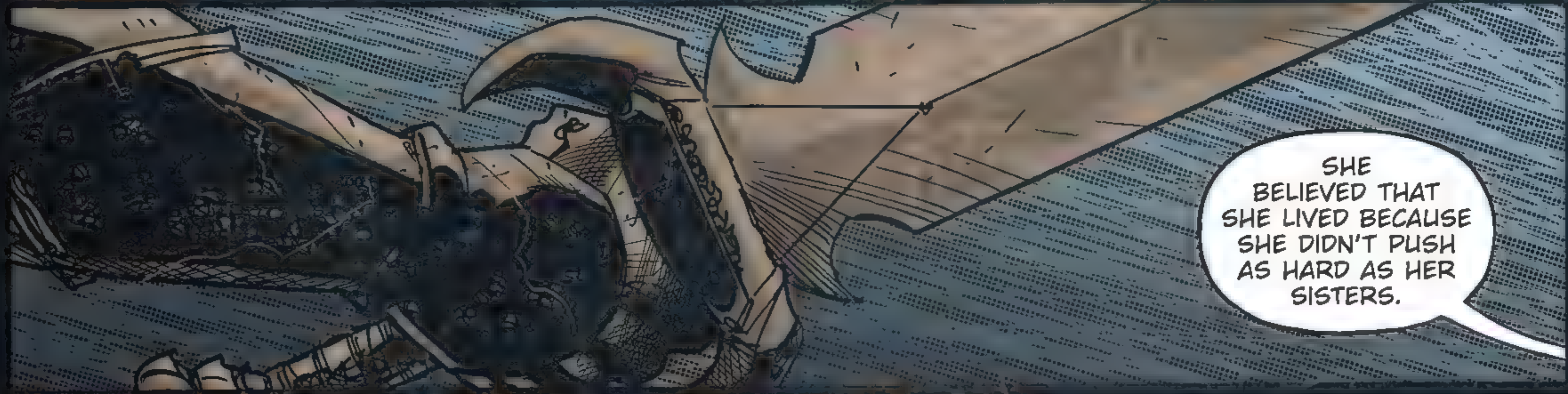
THAT
DEATH WAS NO
BLESSING?



DURING
THE WAR WITH
HERCULES, AELLA'S
FAITH WAVERED. SHE
PRAYED THE WAR
WOULD JUST
END.



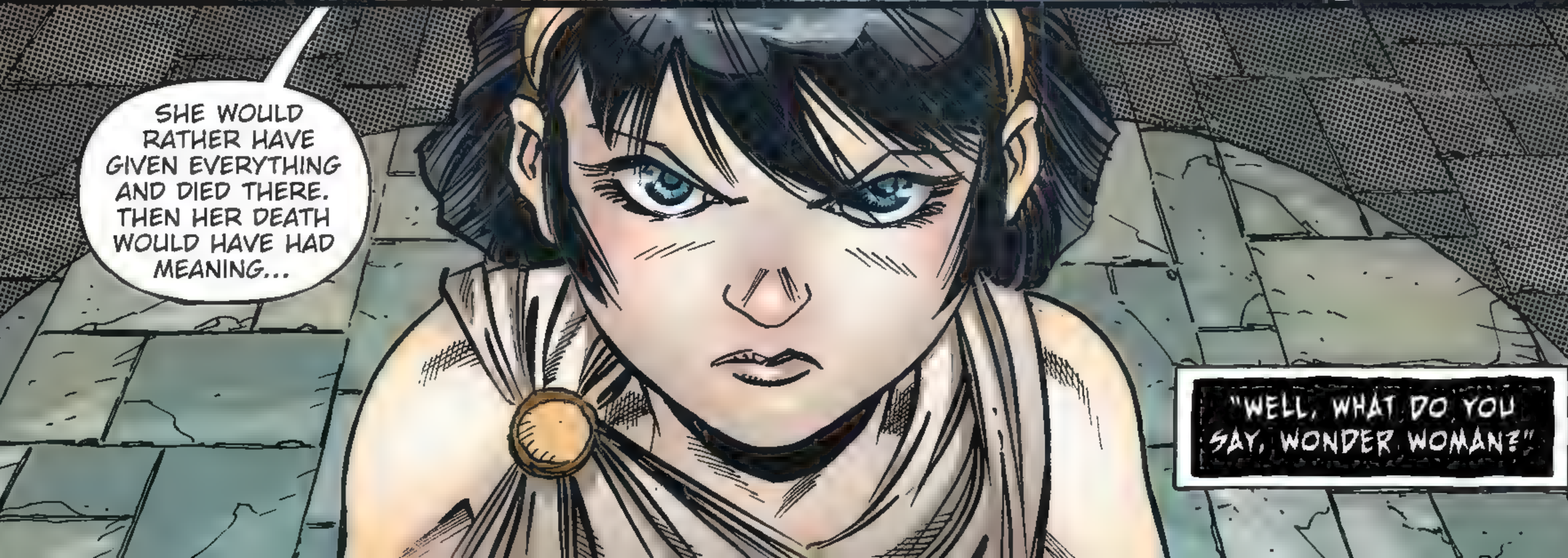
THE
REALITY
OF THE WAR
SCARED
HER.



SHE
BELIEVED THAT
SHE LIVED BECAUSE
SHE DIDN'T PUSH
AS HARD AS HER
SISTERS.

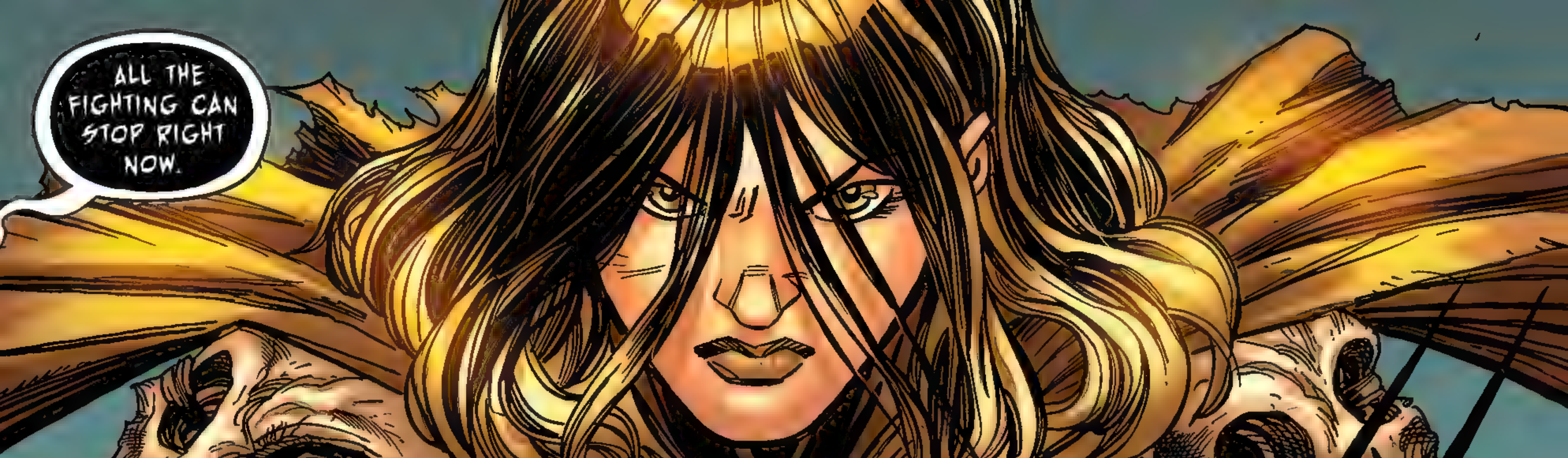


THAT IF
SHE HAD GIVEN
HER ALL, **WITHOUT
FEAR**, HER SISTERS
MIGHT HAVE LIVED
AS WELL.




SHE WOULD
RATHER HAVE
GIVEN EVERYTHING
AND DIED THERE.
THEN HER DEATH
WOULD HAVE HAD
MEANING...

"WELL, WHAT DO YOU
SAY, WONDER WOMAN?"



ALL THE
FIGHTING CAN
STOP RIGHT
NOW.



JUST
SAY THE
WORD!

I'D
RATHER
DIE!



THAT'S
THE SPIRIT!
I KNEW YOU
HAD IT IN
YOU!

WHO
BETTER TO BE
THE HARBINGER
OF DEATH TO THE
MULTIVERSE THAN
THE AVATAR
OF TRUTH.

YOUR
DEATH CRY
WILL SIGNAL TO
YOUR WORLD
THAT THE END
HAS FINALLY
COME.

THE ONLY
SOUND THE
MULTIVERSE IS
GOING TO
HEAR...



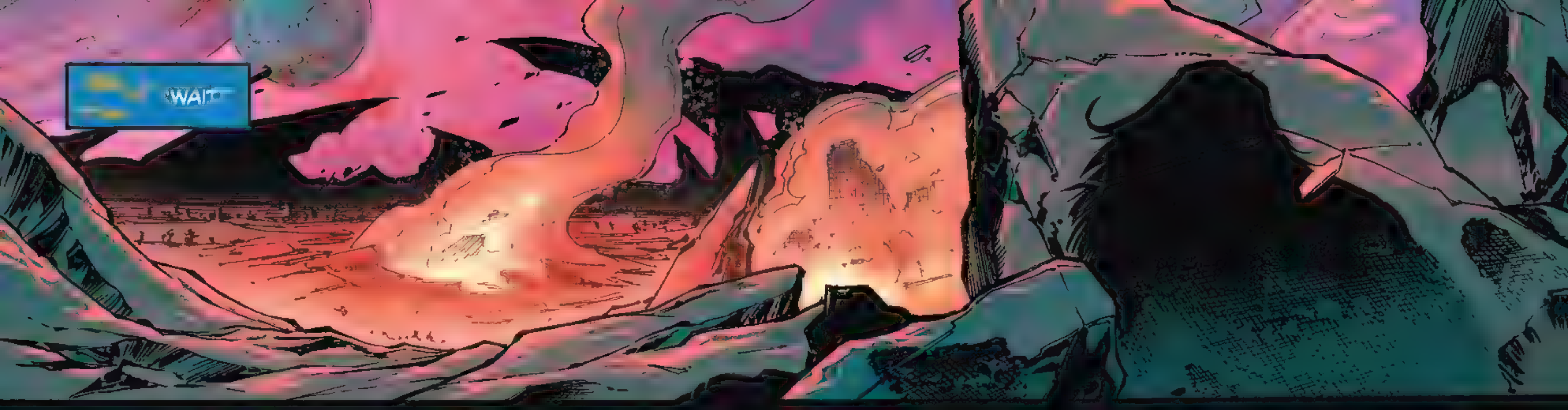
...IS THE
SOUND OF ME
**KICKING
YOUR
ASS!**

FIGHT!

JOSHUA WILLIAMSON &
SCOTT SNYDER WRITERS
DEXTER SOY PLOTTING &
SCOTT KOBUSH PLOTS 15-20 SCRIPTS
VERONICA BANGINI COLORIST
TOM NAPOLITANO ARTIST

THE FINAL FIGHT FOR THE
MULTIVERSE CONCLUDES IN
DARK NIGHTS

**DEATH
METAL #7!**



WAIT



SUPERMAN.
THE MAN OF TOMORROW.

IT DOESN'T
HAVE TO HAPPEN
LIKE THIS.



SHEPHERD.

YES, IT
DOES.

WE HAVE
DECREED
IT.

SAVIOR.

SAINT.

SUPERIORS OF THE ANCIENT HOUSE OF EL.



I WASN'T TALKING TO
YOU. I WAS TALKING
TO HIM.

FOOL.



LAST SUN.
THE CAPTIVE SUPERMAN.

HE HAS
NOTHING
TO SAY.



LISTEN TO ME, CLARK.



WHAT-
EVER HAPPENED,
YOU'VE GOT TO
REMEMBER WHO
YOU *ARE*...

...AND
WHAT THAT *S*
ON YOUR CHEST
MEANS.

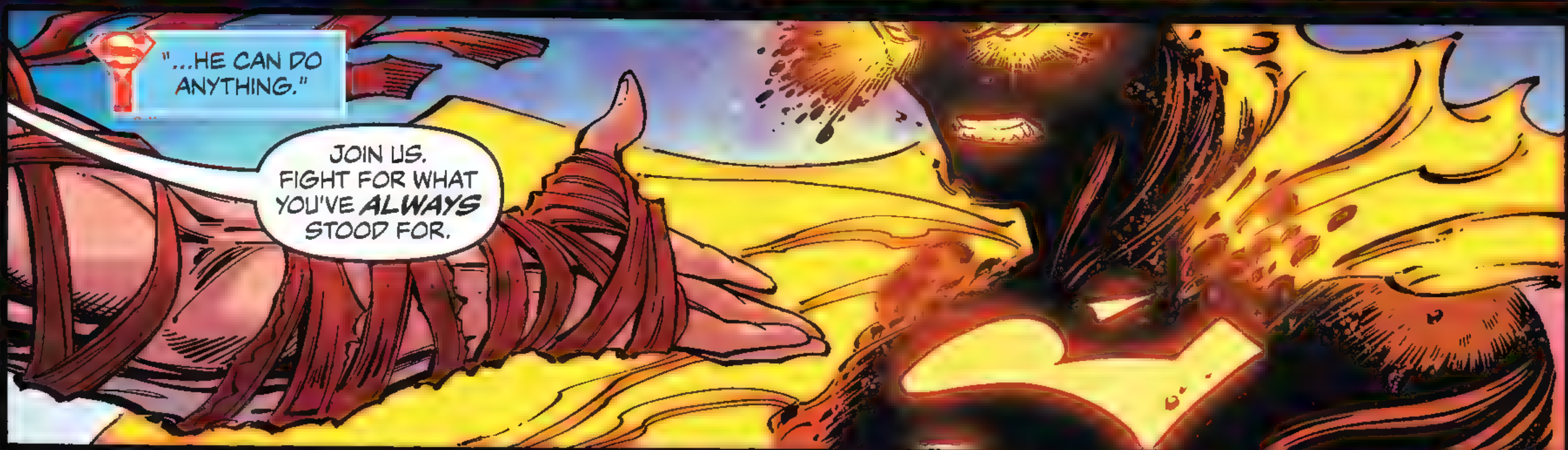


WHAT IS
HE *DOING* UP
THERE?

WHATEVER
HE THINKS HE
HAS TO.

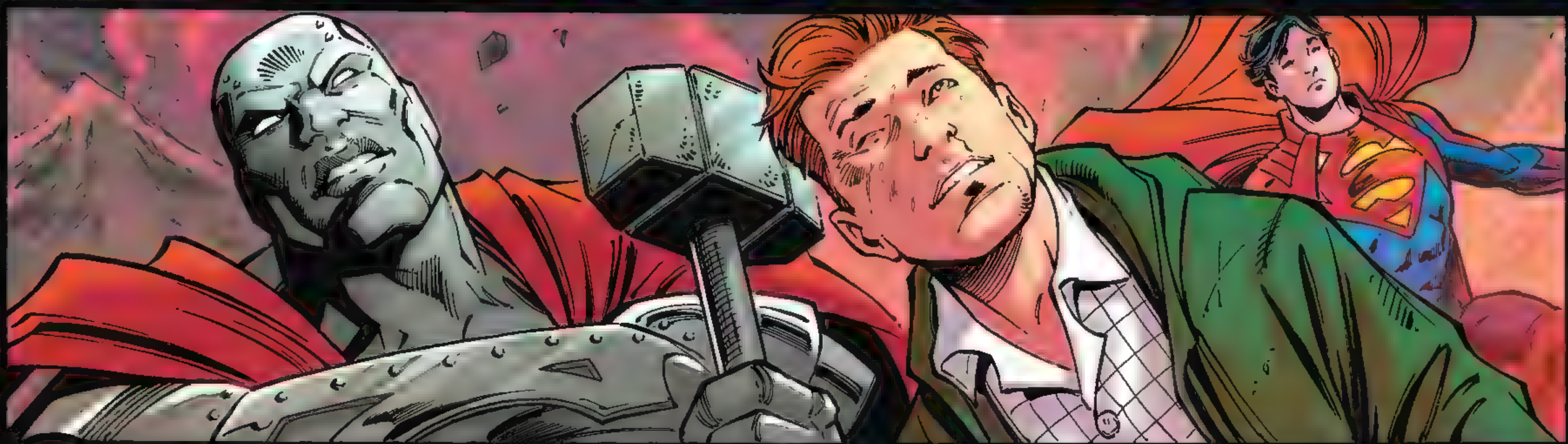
HE
CAN'T THINK
HE CAN *TURN*
THE LAST
SUN.

HE'S
SUPERMAN...



"...HE CAN DO
ANYTHING."

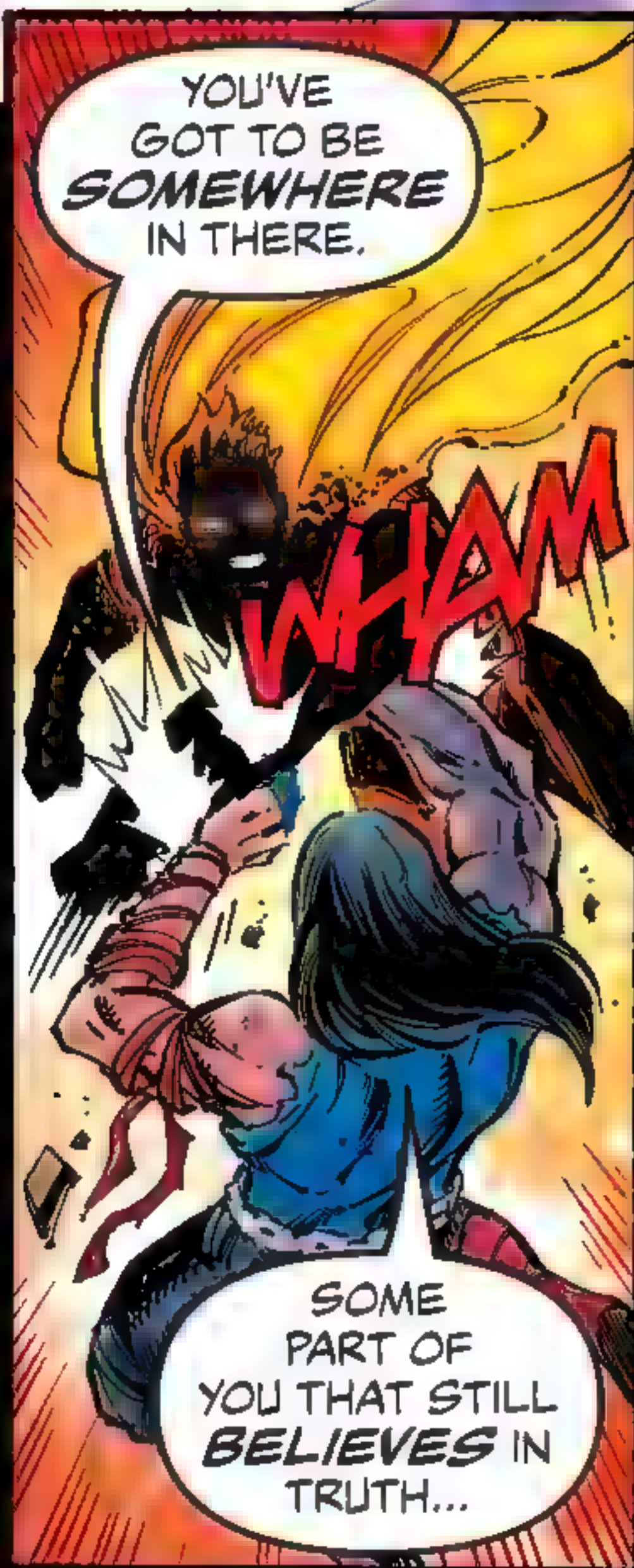
JOIN US.
FIGHT FOR WHAT
YOU'VE *ALWAYS*
STOOD FOR.



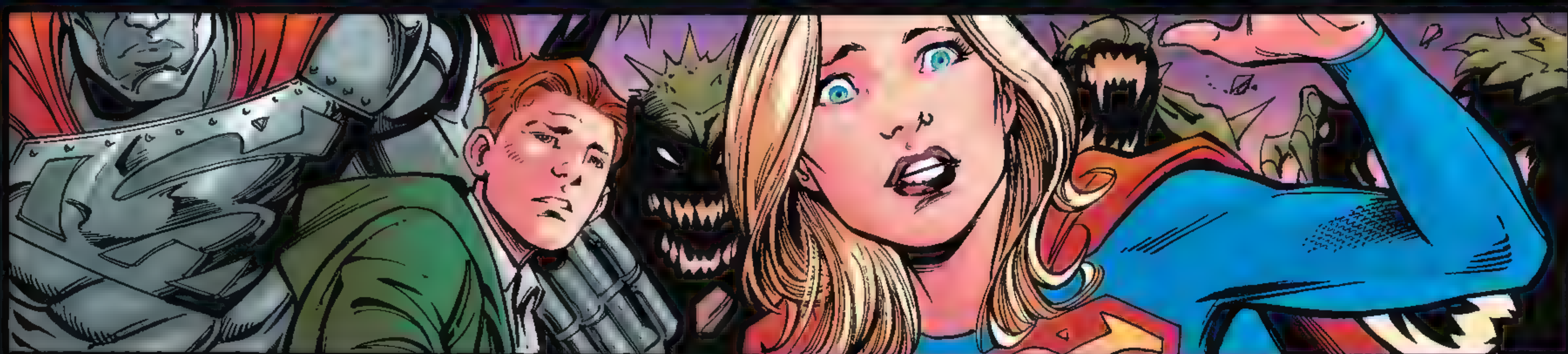
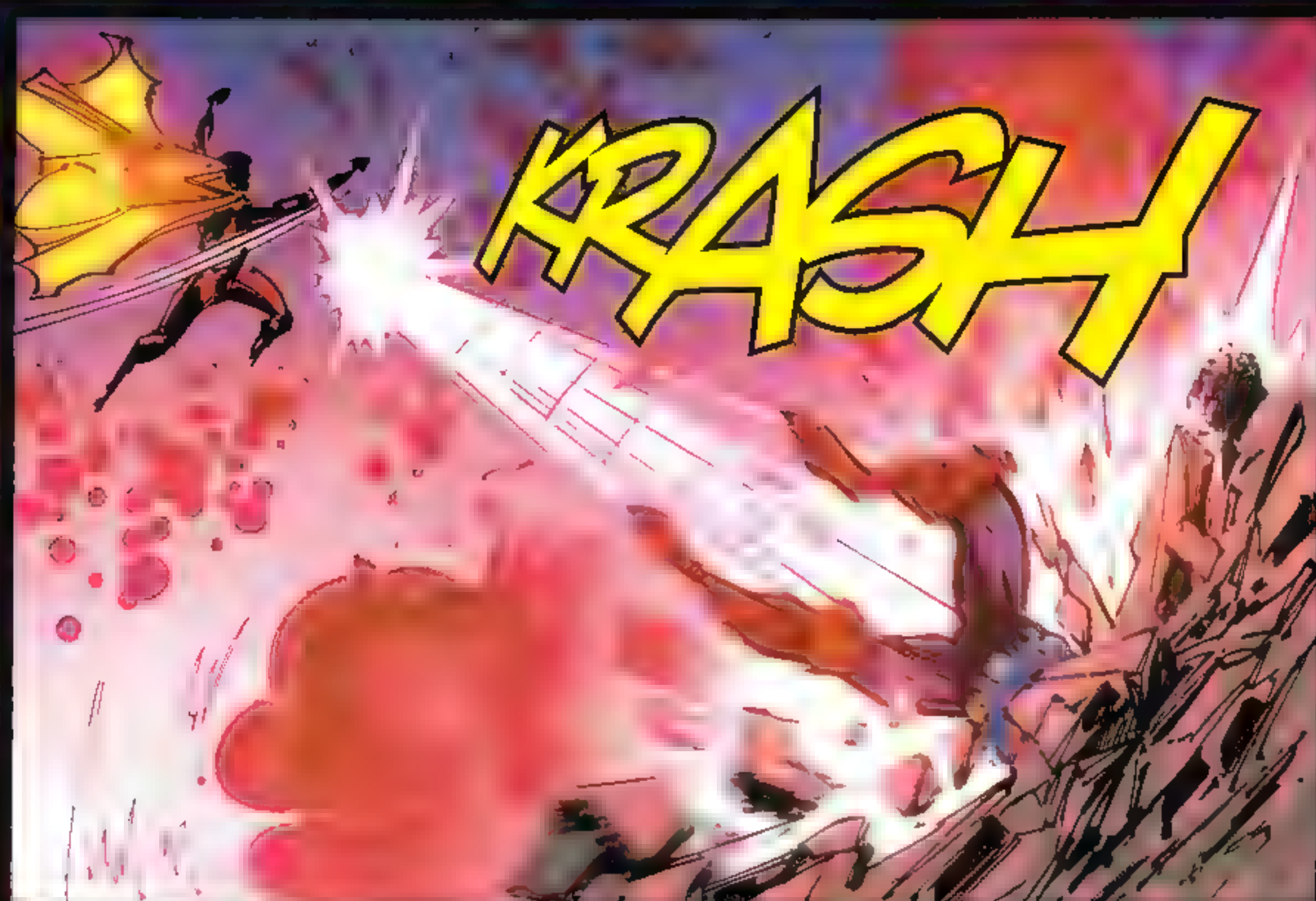
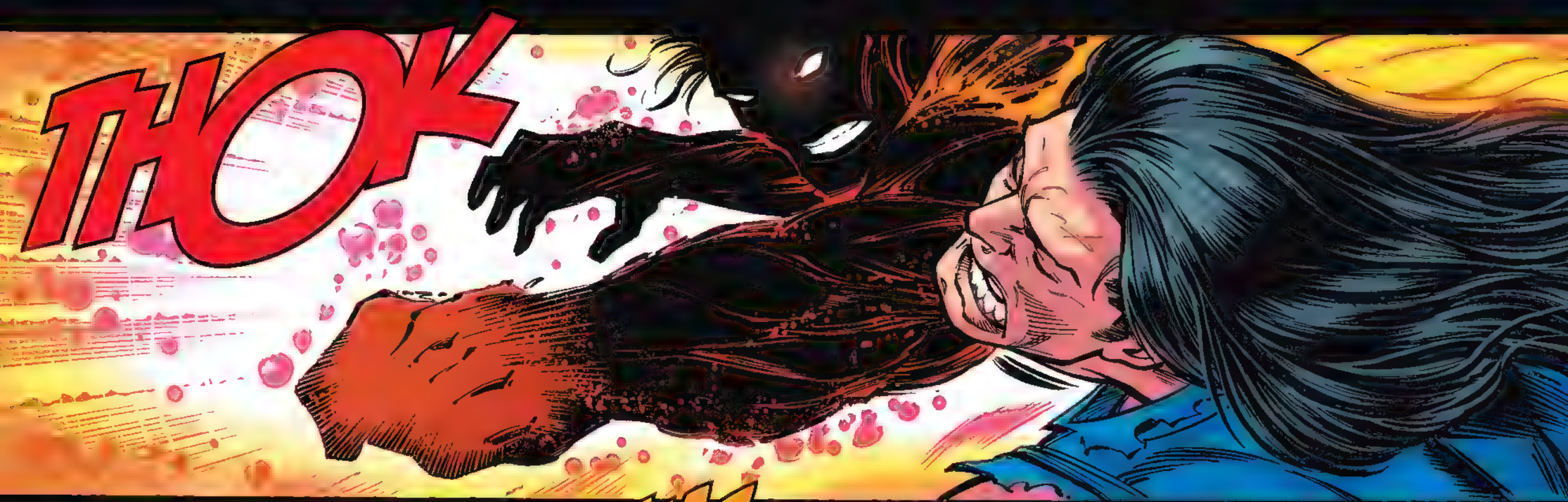


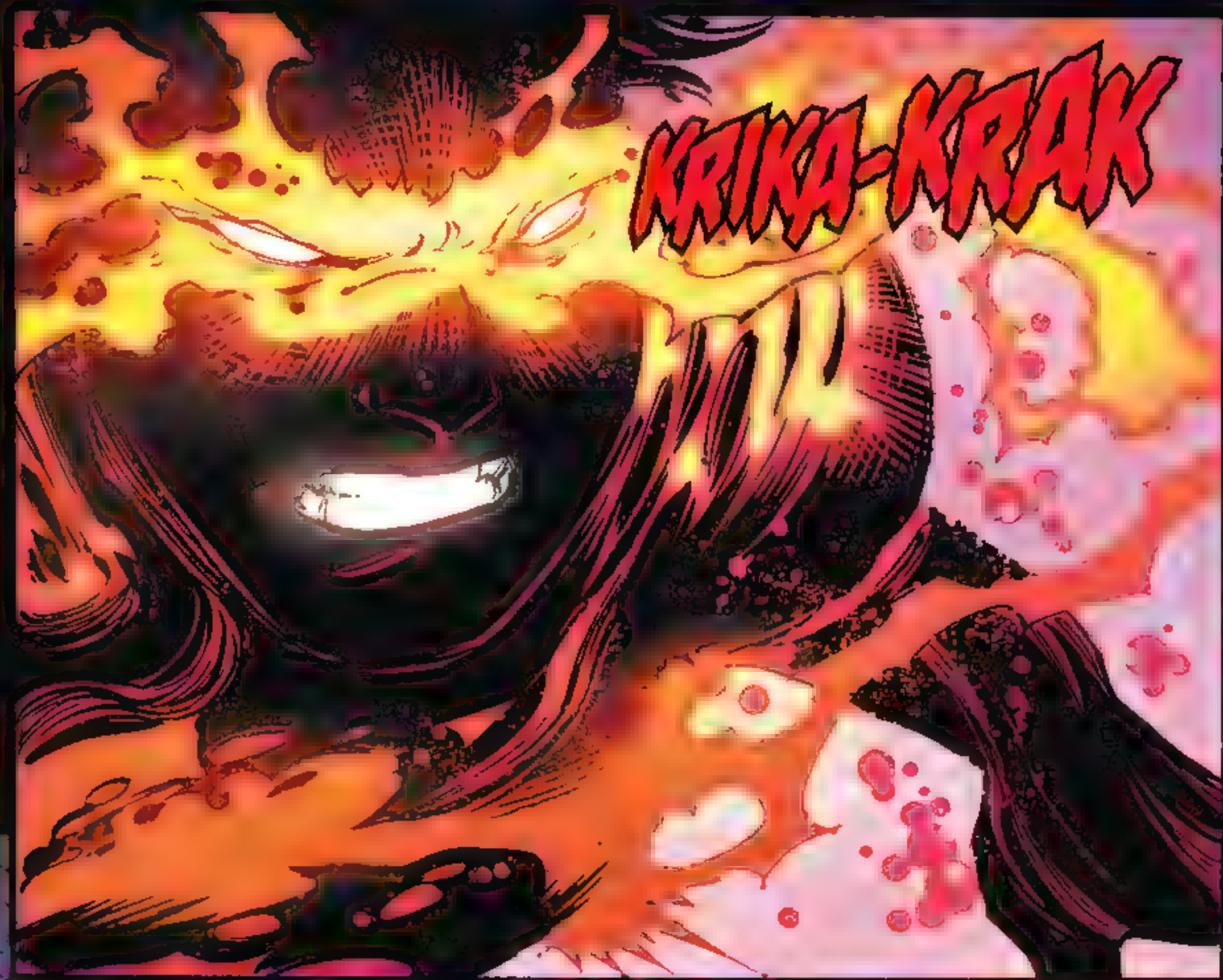
FIRST & LAST MEN

WRITER: MAGDALENE VISAGGIO PENCILLER: PAUL PELLETIER INKER: NORM RAPMUND
COLORIST: ADRIANO LUCAS LETTERER: CARLOS M. MANGUAL

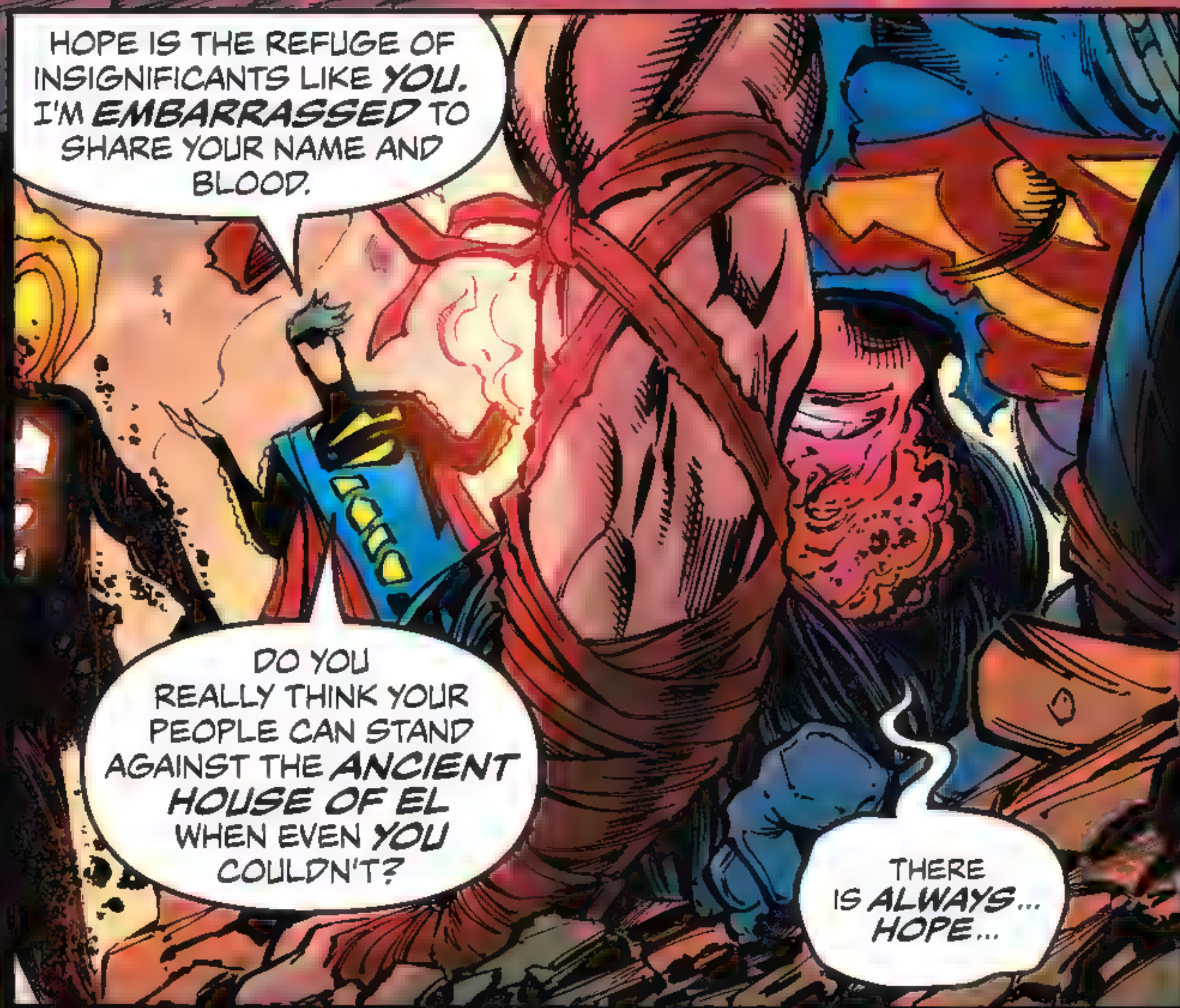








FSSSSH-FOOOOOM KRRONG-KISSSSSH



HOPE IS THE REFUGE OF INSIGNIFICANTS LIKE YOU. I'M **EMBARRASSED** TO SHARE YOUR NAME AND BLOOD.

DO YOU REALLY THINK YOUR PEOPLE CAN STAND AGAINST THE **ANCIENT HOUSE OF EL** WHEN EVEN YOU COULDN'T?

THERE IS ALWAYS... **HOPE...**



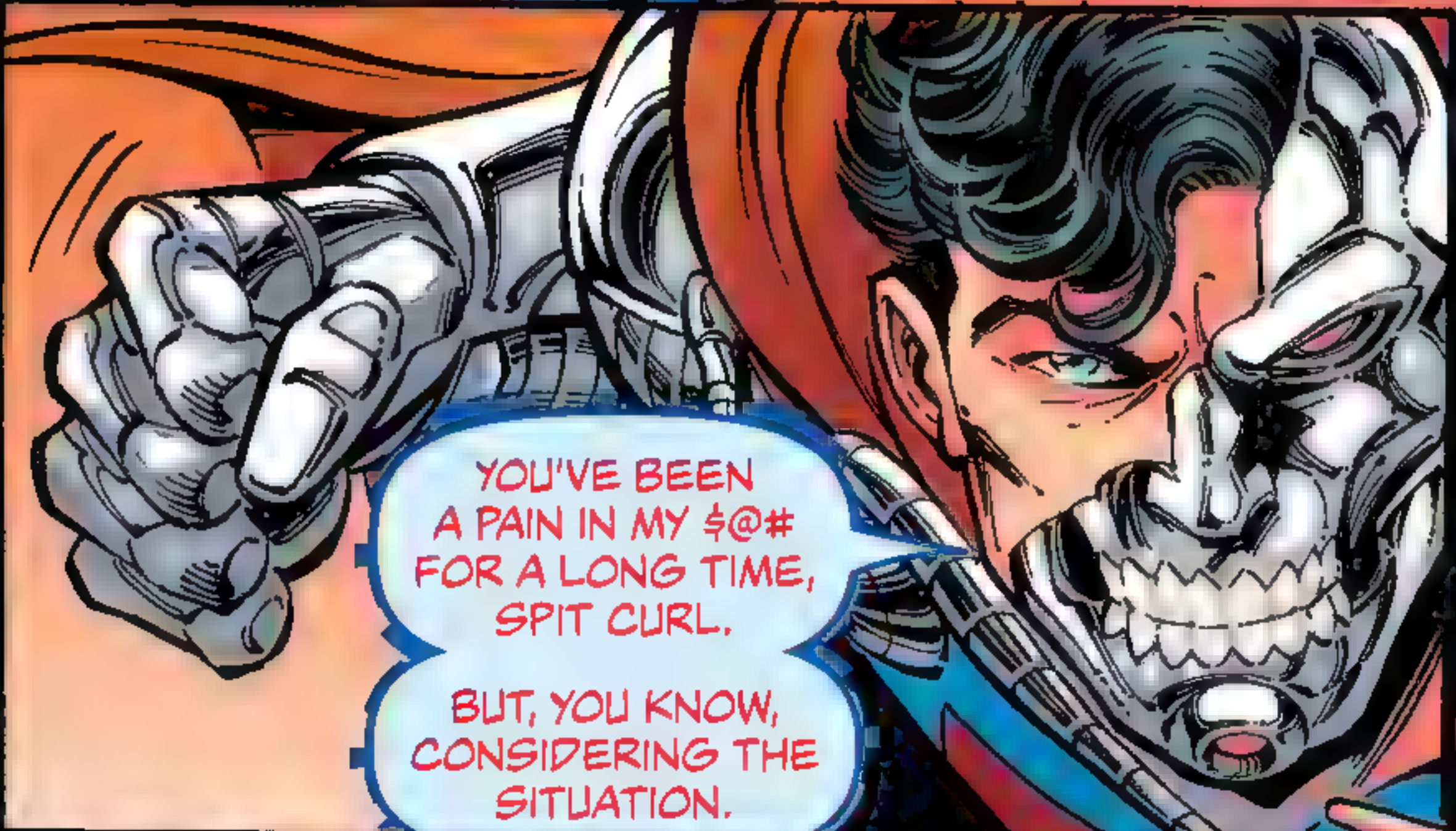
SO LET'S JUST WAIT FOR **HOPE** TO SAVE THE DAY. I'M SURE IT WILL BE HERE ANY--

SURE AS SHOOTIN'.



...HENSHAW?
LUTHOR? IS
THAT ZOD?

UNFAILINGLY,
SON OF JOR-EL.



YOU'VE BEEN
A PAIN IN MY \$@#
FOR A LONG TIME,
SPIT CURL.

BUT, YOU KNOW,
CONSIDERING THE
SITUATION.



WHAM



I WASN'T
EXPECTING
YOU. ANY OF
YOU.

WE
MAY HAVE BEEN
OPPONENTS, ALIEN.
EVEN ADVERSARIES. BUT
AT THE END OF THE DAY,
EVEN WE KNOW THAT
SUPERMAN...

...IS ON
THE SIDE OF
LIFE.

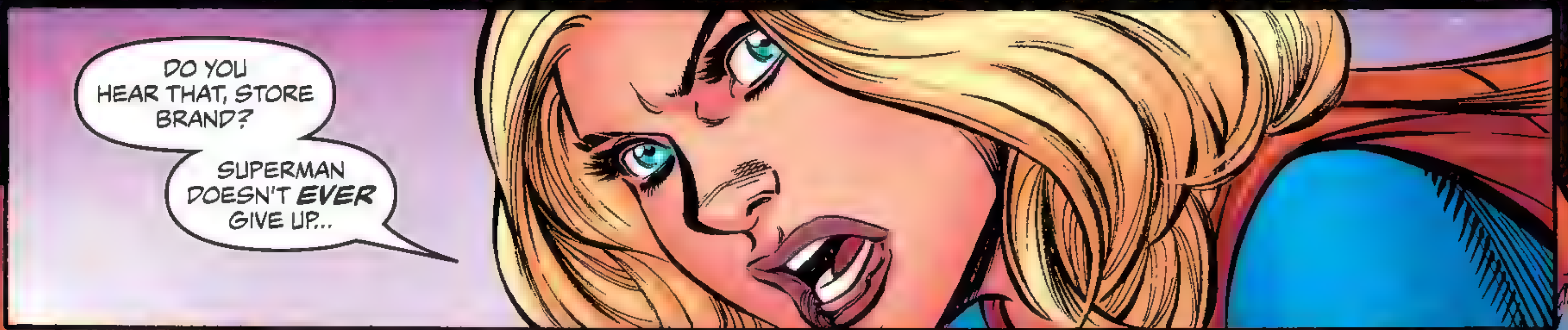
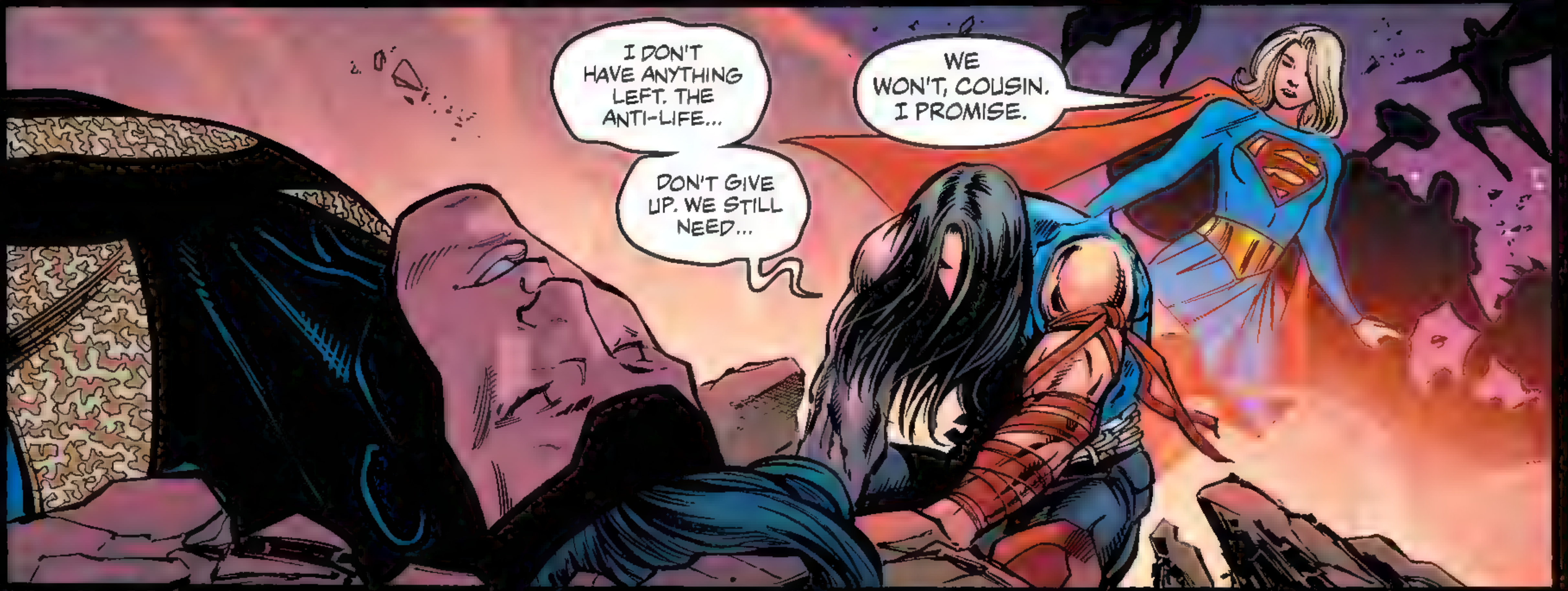


ONLY
THE MIGHTY
PREVAIL!

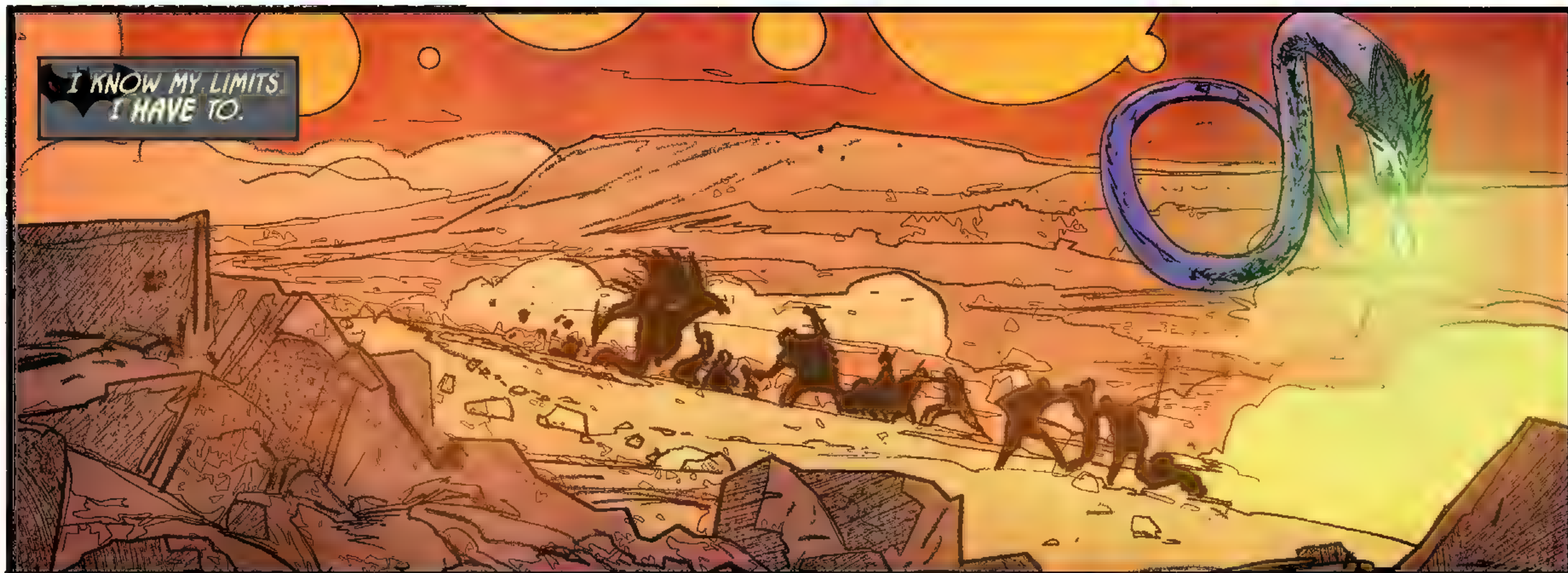
HANK!



**KRAKA-
THOOM**



AND SO, THE NEVER-ENDING BATTLE CONTINUES!



I KNOW MY LIMITS.
I HAVE TO.



YOU CAN'T FIGHT ALONGSIDE
GODS AND ALIENS WITHOUT
KNOWING HOW FAR YOU CAN
PUSH YOUR BODY.

HOW MANY PUNCHES CAN YOU TAKE?
HOW MANY CAN YOU DISH OUT? HOW
LONG CAN YOU STAY ON YOUR FEET?
HOW LONG CAN YOU STAY AWAKE?



I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO PUSH
MYSELF FURTHER THAN OTHER
MEN. I'VE TRAINED A LIFETIME
TO GET TO THAT POINT.

BY ANY METRIC,
I'VE PASSED
EVERY LIMIT.



IF I HADN'T DIED MONTHS AGO,
I WOULD BE DEAD RIGHT NOW. I KNOW
THAT. BUT MY FAMILY IS STILL ALIVE...

...AND THEY ARE
APPROACHING THEIR
OWN LIMITS

I SEE THEM START TO FADE.
THEIR HITS LAND SOFTER.
THEIR BREATHING IS
GETTING SHALLOW.



I AM SO DAMN PROUD OF
THEM. THIS MIGHT BE THE END
OF EVERYTHING. THERE'S NO
CHOICE BUT PUSHING PAST
THE LIMIT AND BEYOND HUMAN
CAPABILITY, BEYOND DEATH.

AND THEY DO IT WITHOUT THINKING
THEY KNOW WE NEED TO KEEP
FIGHTING IF THERE'S GOING TO BE
A WORLD ON THE OTHER SIDE.

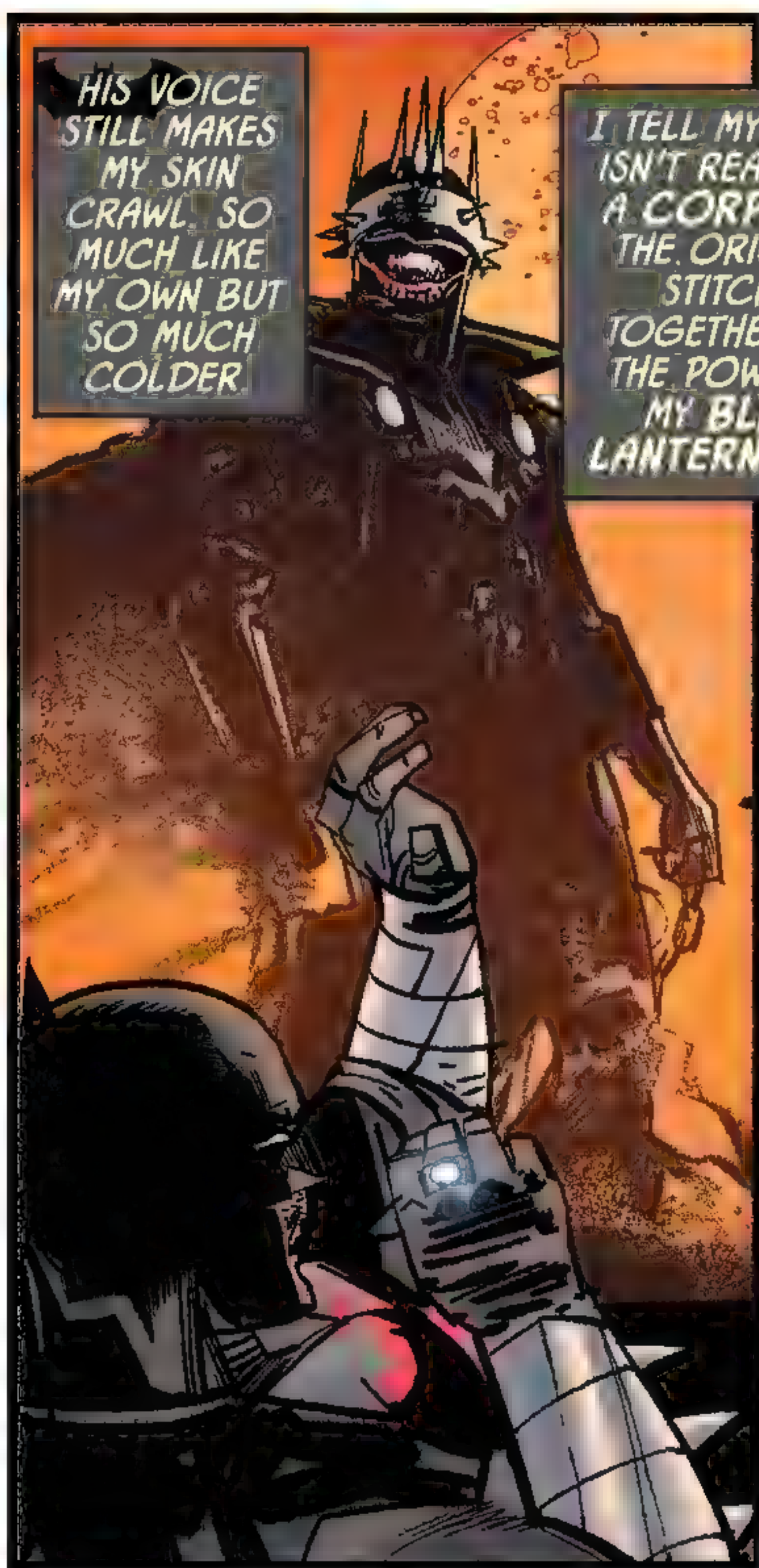


I TELL MYSELF I NEED TO PUSH
HARDER. TO TAKE EVERY HIT I CAN.
THESE NIGHTMARES ARE ALL FACETS OF
ME. I CAN TAKE IT IN WAYS THEY CAN'T.

I DON'T HAVE
ANY LIMITS.
NOT ANYMORE.



FAMILY!
BEHIND ME! WE
NEED TO ADVANCE,
TOGETHER!



I TELL MYSELF HE ISN'T REAL. JUST A CORPSE OF THE ORIGINAL, STITCHED TOGETHER WITH THE POWER OF MY BLACK LANTERN RING.



THE REAL BATMAN WHO LAUGHS IS FIGHTING ON A MUCH GRANDER SCALE. BUT THIS ROTTING HUSK SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO RESIST MY CONTROL.



HOW ARE YOU DOING THIS?

COME ON, BRUCE. THINK ABOUT HOW POWERFUL I WAS WHEN YOU GOT THAT RING. DID YOU THINK I WOULDN'T PREPARE FOR IT?

WE DON'T HAVE TIME.



I KNOW... ALL YOUR LITTLE KIDS ARE GOING TO DIE. ISN'T THAT SAD?

YOU ONLY BROUGHT ME BACK BECAUSE IT PUT MORE DEAD MEAT BETWEEN YOUR CHILDREN AND THE ARMIES. MY BETTER HALF UNLEASHED ON THE WORLD.

BUT YOU DIDN'T REALIZE I HAD MY OWN RING.

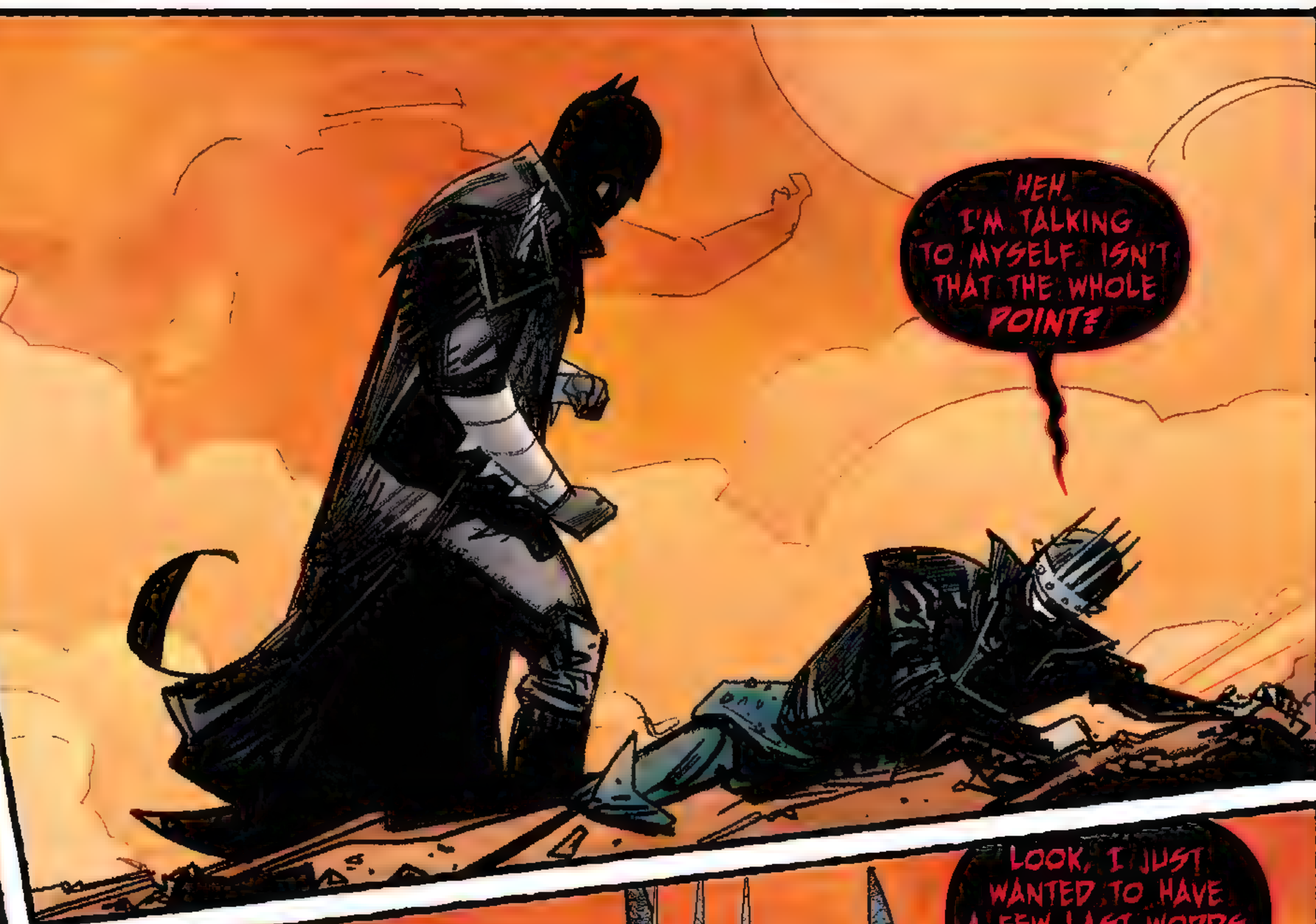
YES, I DID. THAT'S WHY I TOOK A PAGE FROM JASON BLOOD'S BOOK OF NECROMANCY, BINDING YOU TO ME.



NOW, THAT MIGHT HAVE WORKED IF I HADN'T CURED THE LEATHER IN MY SUIT WITH THE OILS FROM A LAZARUS PIT... THERE'S STILL ENOUGH LIFE IN HERE TO PUSH BACK.



YOU DON'T THINK I DOUSED YOUR CORPSE WITH A **COUNTERAGENT** BEFORE I BROUGHT YOU BACK? WHO DO YOU THINK YOU'RE TALKING TO?



HEH! I'M TALKING TO MYSELF. ISN'T THAT THE WHOLE POINT?



LOOK, I JUST WANTED TO HAVE A FEW LAST WORDS AT THE END OF EVERYTHING.

HERE'S THE WAY I SEE IT, BATMAN.



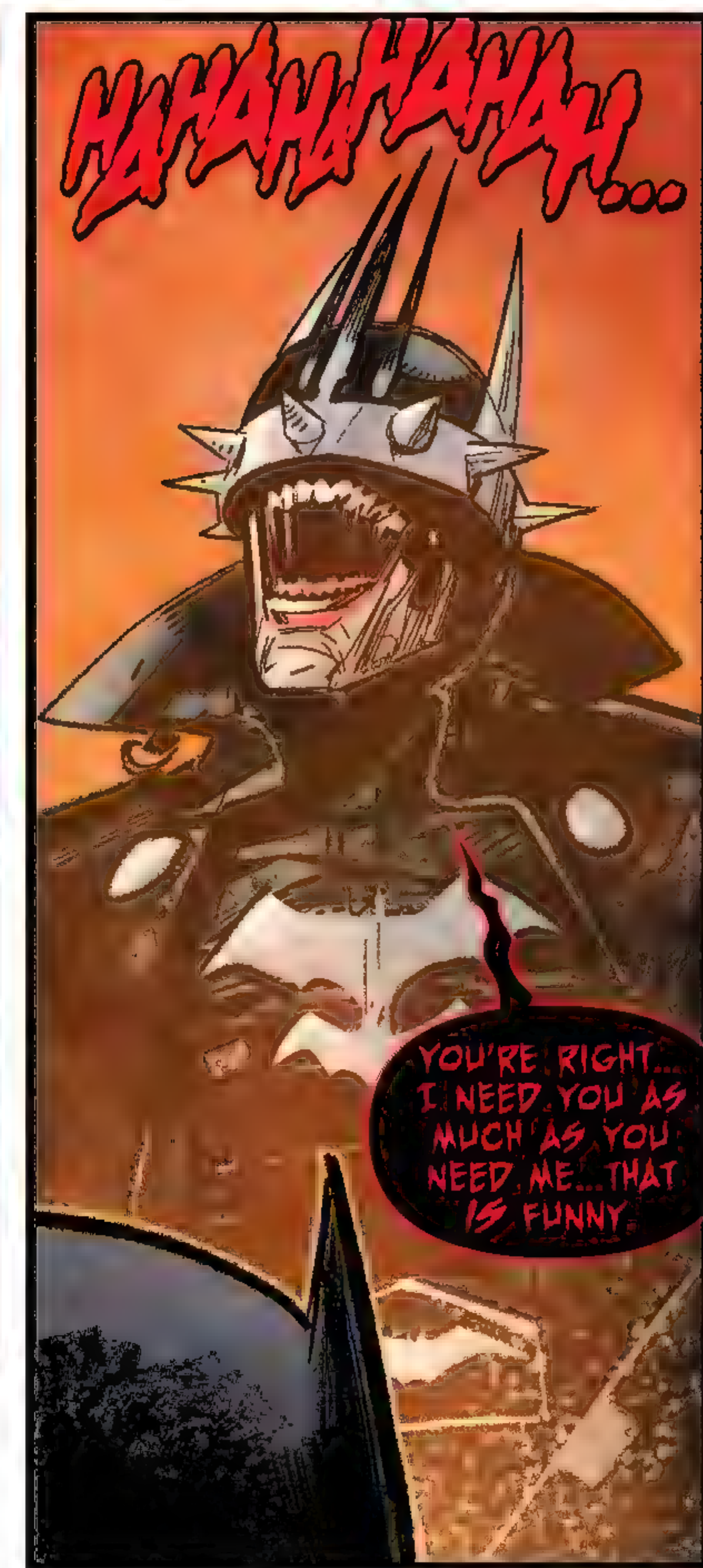
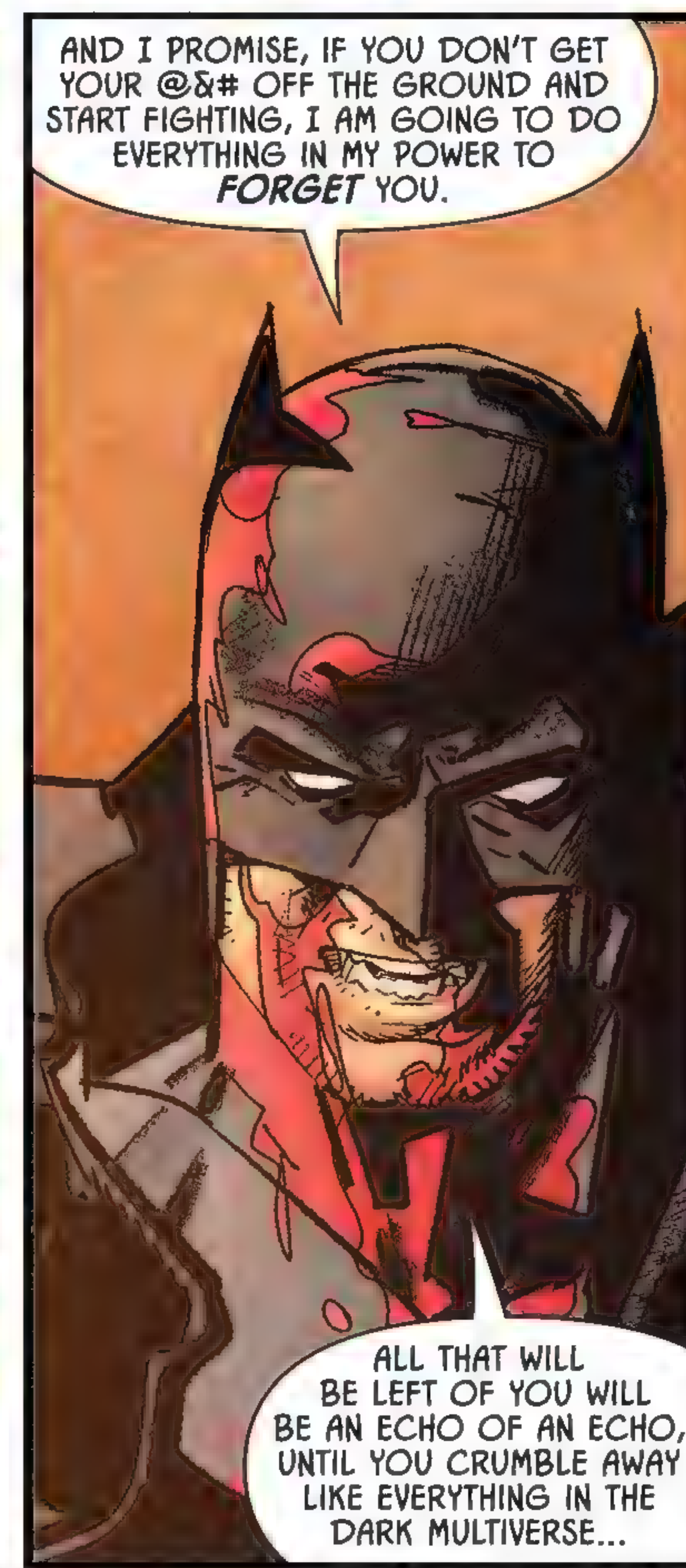
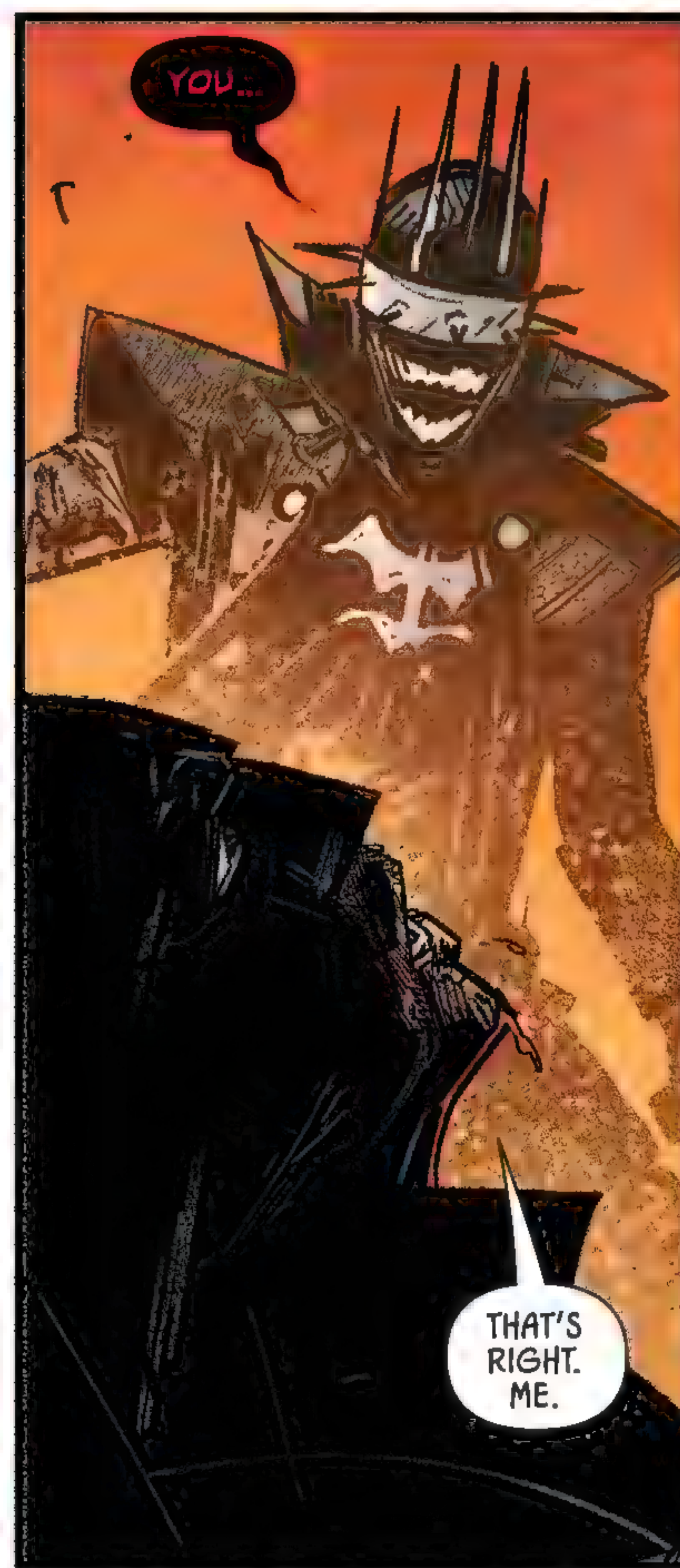
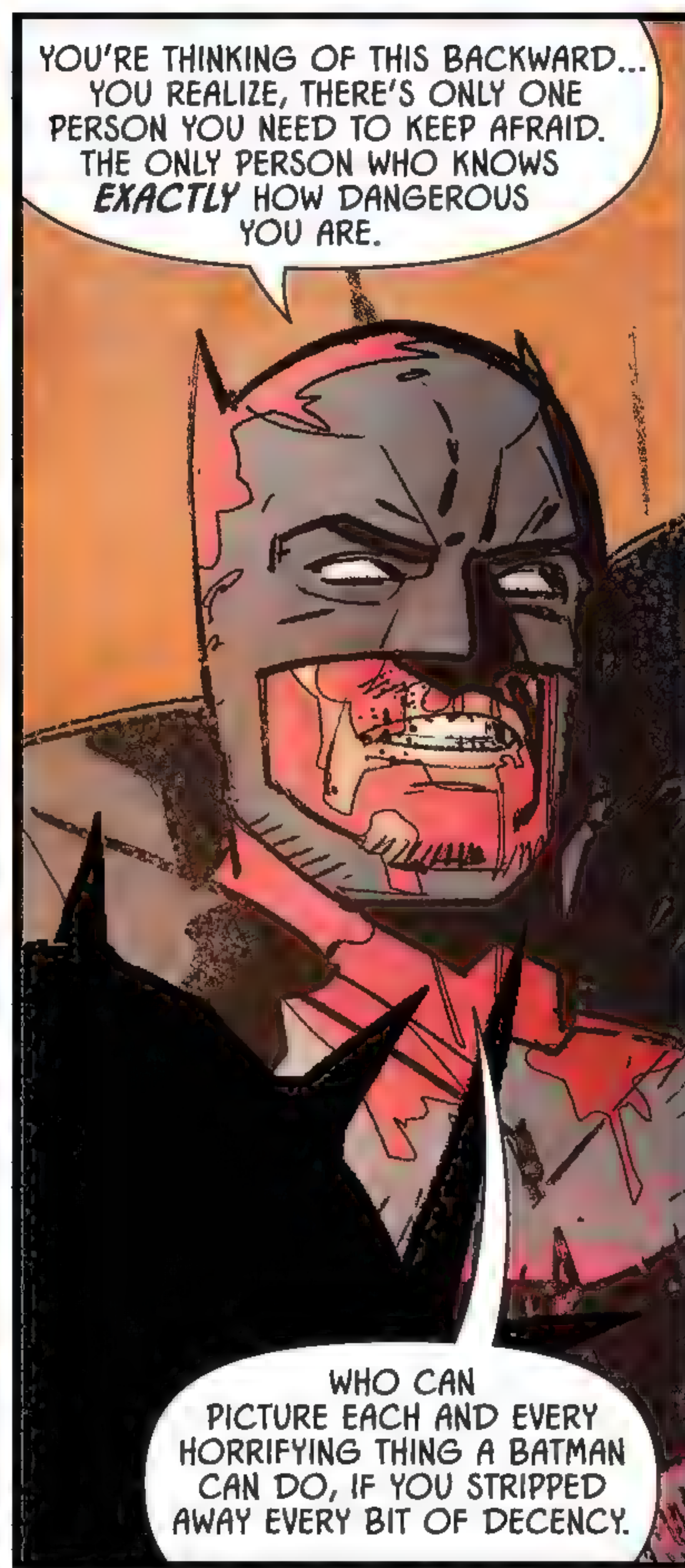
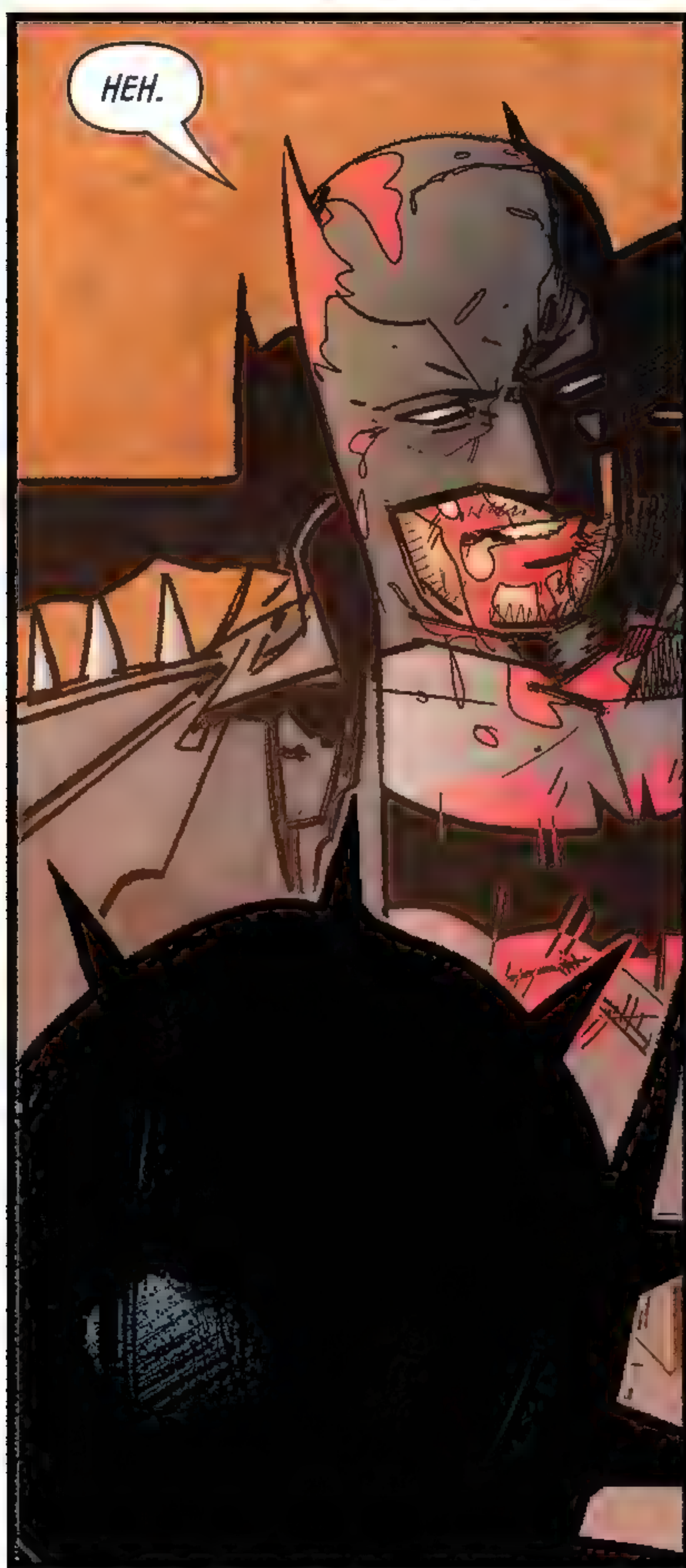
EITHER THE BIG COSMIC VERSION OF ME IS GOING TO WIN, AND HE'S GOING TO TURN THIS WHOLE MULTIVERSE INTO A WEAPON TO KILL WHATEVER GOD OR SOURCE IS OUT THERE IN THE OMNIVERSE...

SO WHAT I DO HERE RIGHT NOW, IT'S NOT GOING TO MATTER...



...OR HE'S GOING TO LOSE, AND ALL THE PIECES MIGHT GET PUT BACK TOGETHER. A BIG, BOLD NEW MULTIVERSE, WITH THE DARK MULTIVERSE TRAPPED DOWN THERE LIKE IT USED TO BE.

WHAT'S YOUR POINT?



ANOTHER LIMIT GONE... I SEE
A JOKER, DRAGON IN MY EYE,
AND HEAR THAT COLD VOICE
LAUGHING. IT'S CONTAGIOUS...

EXHAUSTED BEYOND
BELIEF, I LET GO.

HA HA HA
HA HA HA
HA HA HA!

HA HA HA HA HA!

THE BATMEN WHO LAUGH

writer JAMES TYNION IV

artist ALEX MALEEV

colorist MATT HOLLINGSWORTH

letterer ROB LEIGH

END

I SHOULDN'T
BE HERE.



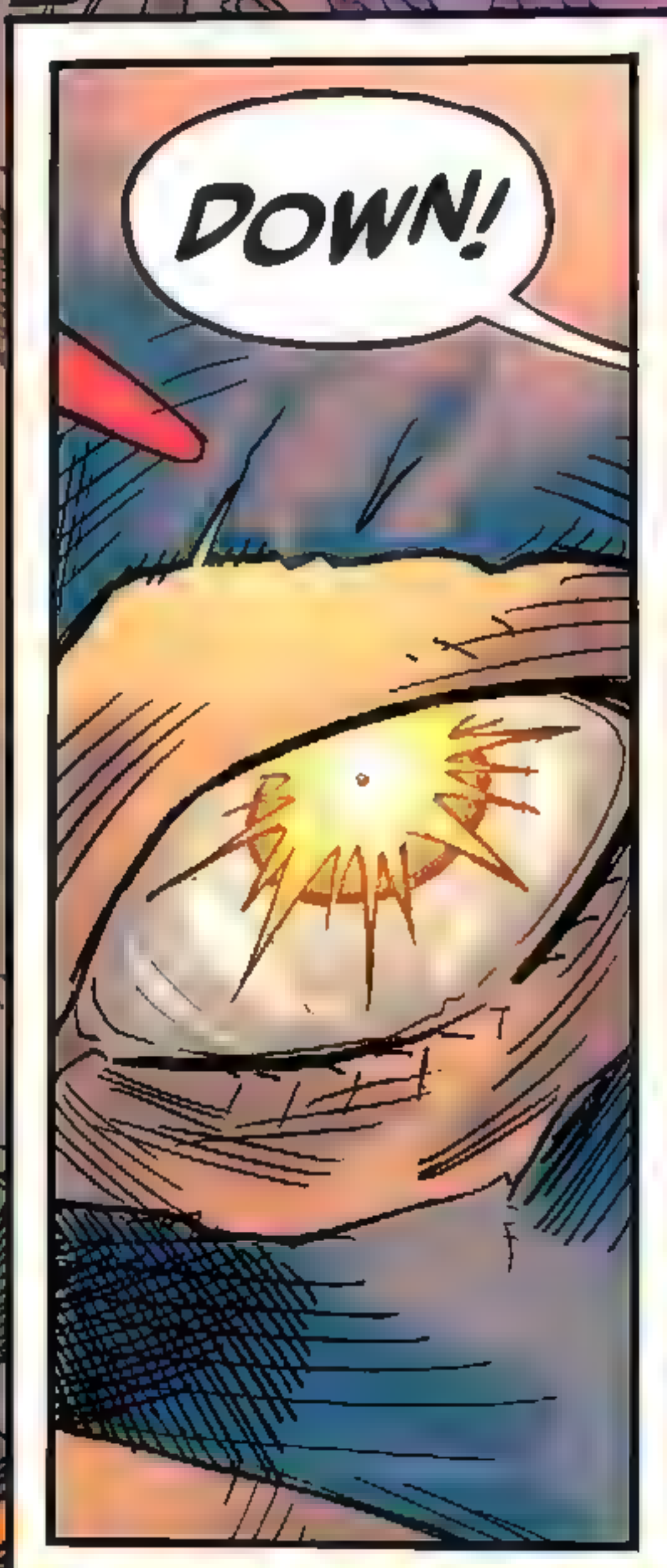
BUT THEN
AGAIN...



...NONE OF
US SHOULD.

UNSTABLE ATOMS

DOWN!



KYLE HIGGINS
WRITER

SCOTT HOLINS
ARTIST

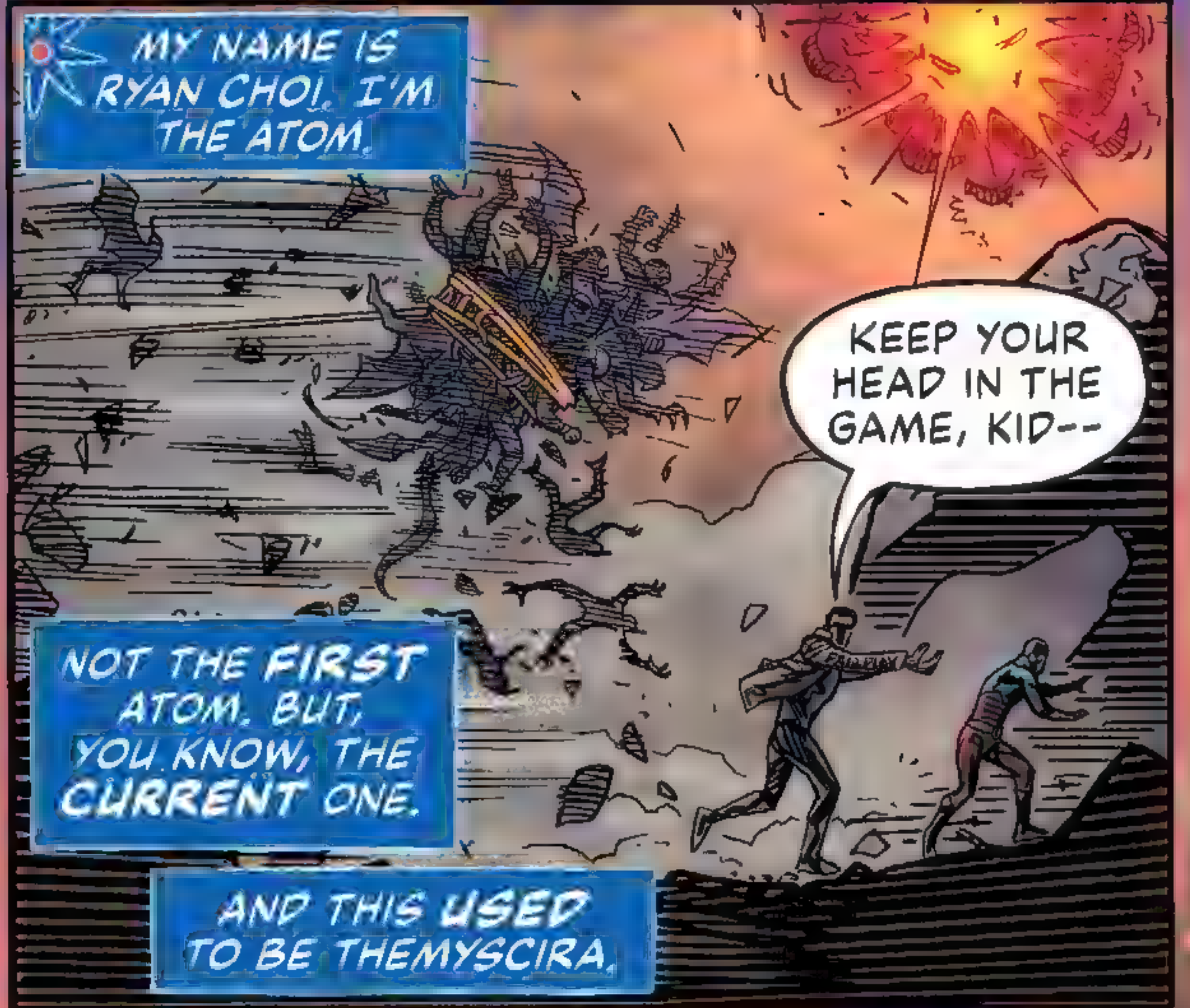
JOHN KALISZ
COLORIST

TOM NAPOLITANO
LETTERER



YOU
OKAY?

—KOFF
KOFF— YEAH,
MICHAEL...
**TOTALLY
FINE...**

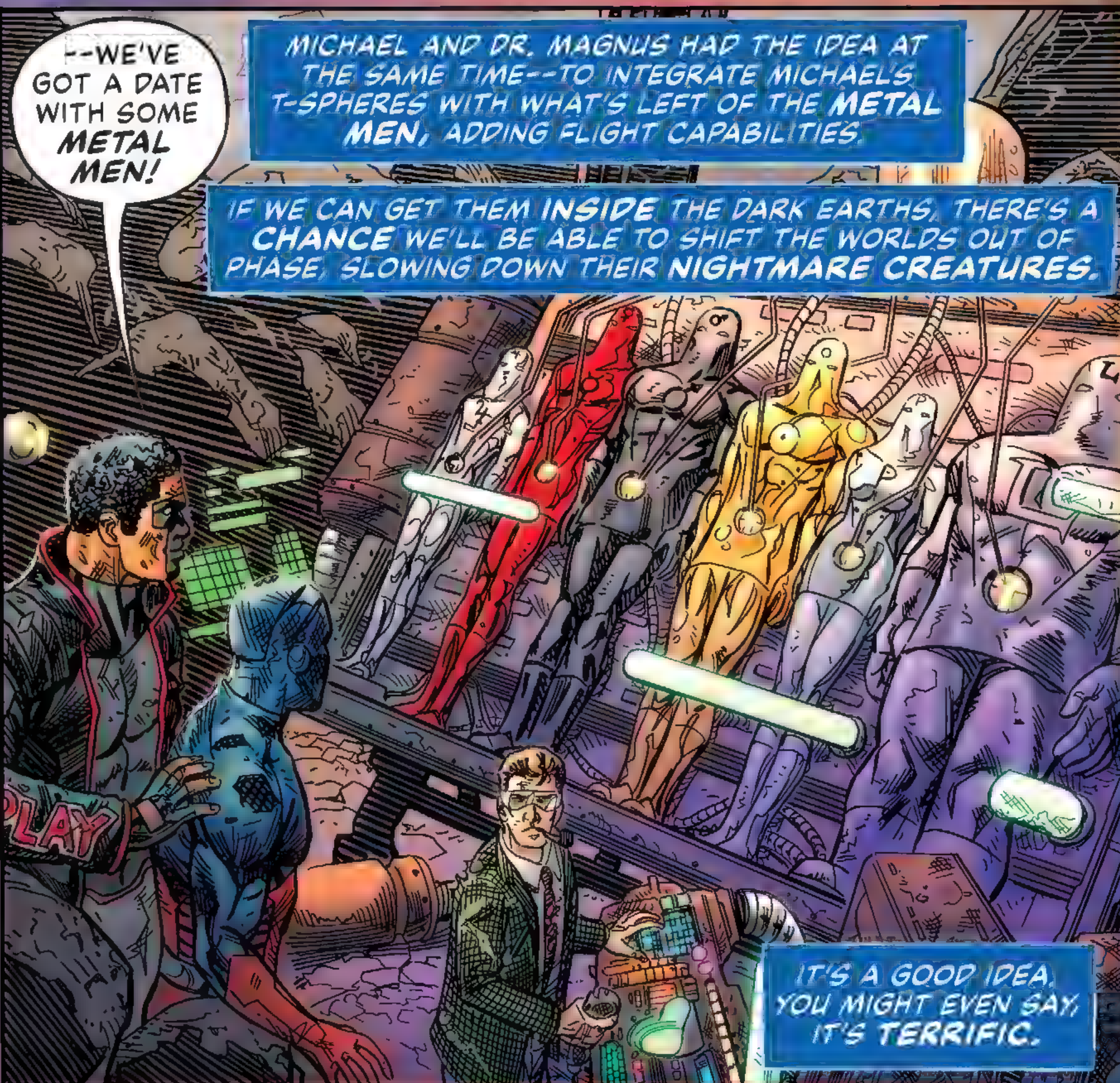


MY NAME IS
RYAN CHOI. I'M
THE ATOM.

KEEP YOUR
HEAD IN THE
GAME, KID--

NOT THE FIRST
ATOM. BUT,
YOU KNOW, THE
CURRENT ONE.

AND THIS USED
TO BE THEMYSCIRA.



--WE'VE
GOT A DATE
WITH SOME
**METAL
MEN!**

MICHAEL AND DR. MAGNUS HAD THE IDEA AT
THE SAME TIME--TO INTEGRATE MICHAEL'S
T-SPHERES WITH WHAT'S LEFT OF THE METAL
MEN, ADDING FLIGHT CAPABILITIES.

IF WE CAN GET THEM INSIDE THE DARK EARTHS, THERE'S A
CHANCE WE'LL BE ABLE TO SHIFT THE WORLDS OUT OF
PHASE, SLOWING DOWN THEIR NIGHTMARE CREATURES.

IT'S A GOOD IDEA,
YOU MIGHT EVEN SAY,
IT'S TERRIFIC.

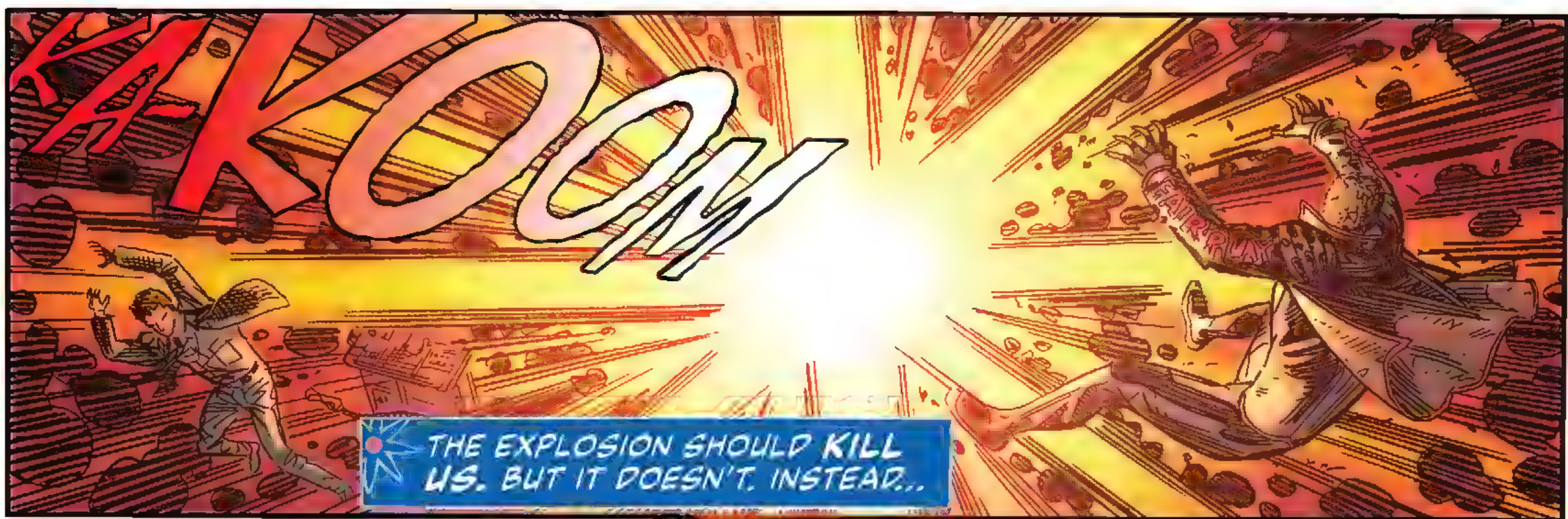
AND I KNOW
IT WON'T WORK.

GUYS, I'M
SORRY BUT...WHAT
ARE WE EVEN DOING
HERE? I MEAN, THIS
IS THE END OF THE
WORLD--THE END OF
EXISTENCE.

IT'S GODS
AND MAGIC AND
HELLISH NIGHTMARE
MONSTERS...



...WHEN
SCIENCE MEANS
NOTHING, WHAT
DIFFERENCE COULD
THE THREE OF
US POSSIBLY
MAKE--



THE EXPLOSION SHOULD KILL US. BUT IT DOESN'T. INSTEAD...



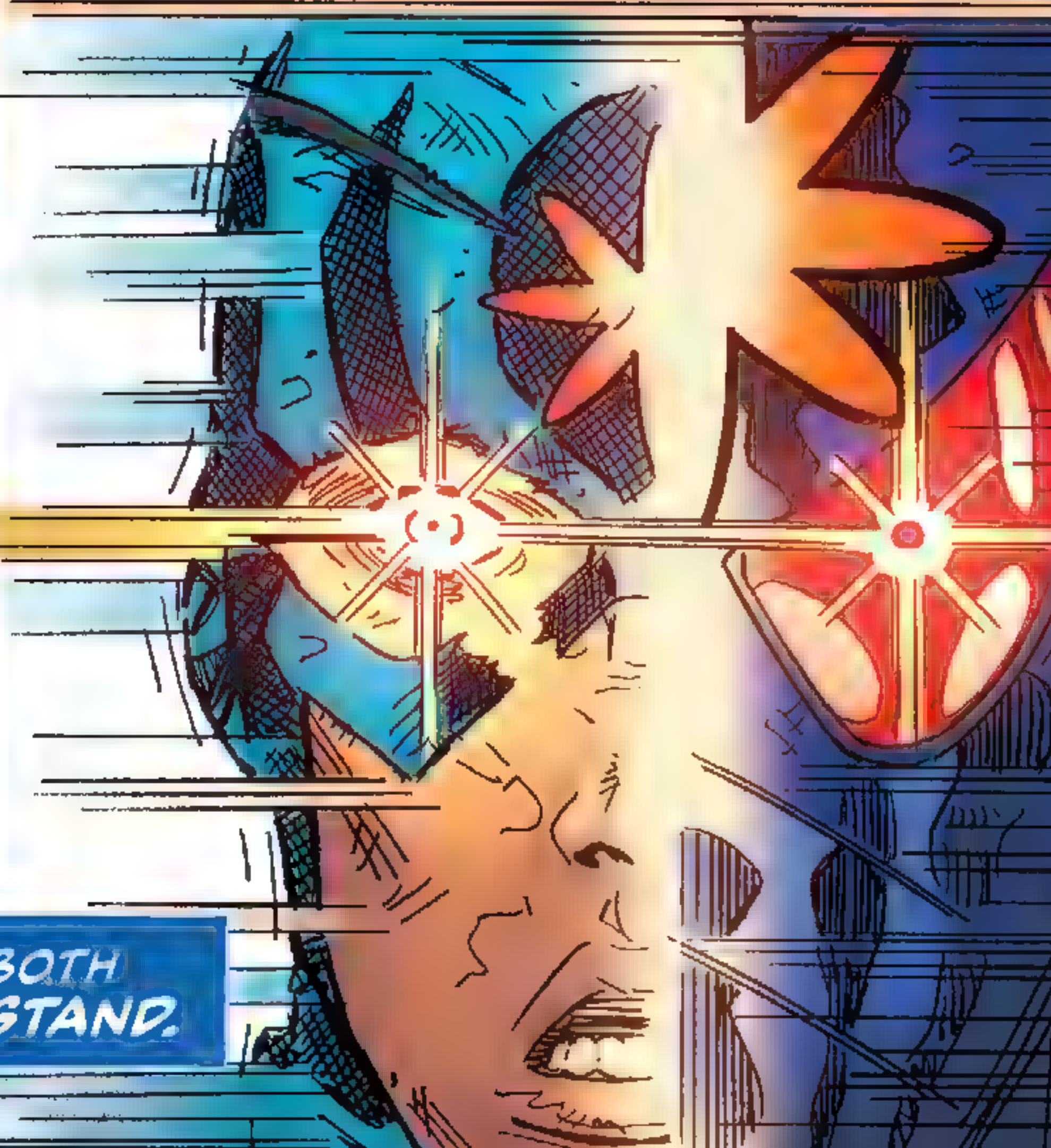
...I GET TO SEE MY OWN DARK NIGHTMARE.



MAYBE IT HAS TO DO WITH THE BARRIER BETWEEN REALITIES MELTING. OR THE TYPE OF INVERTED RADIATION POURING OFF OF HIM.



EITHER WAY, THE SECOND WE SEE EACH OTHER...



...WE BOTH UNDERSTAND.



A WORLD LIKE
OURS. AT LEAST,
TO START.

EXCEPT, I--NO, HE--LET
HIS LIMITATIONS AND HIS
FEARS TAKE CONTROL.

HE STOPPED QUESTIONING.
HE STOPPED EXPLORING. HE
GREW...BUT ONLY PHYSICALLY.

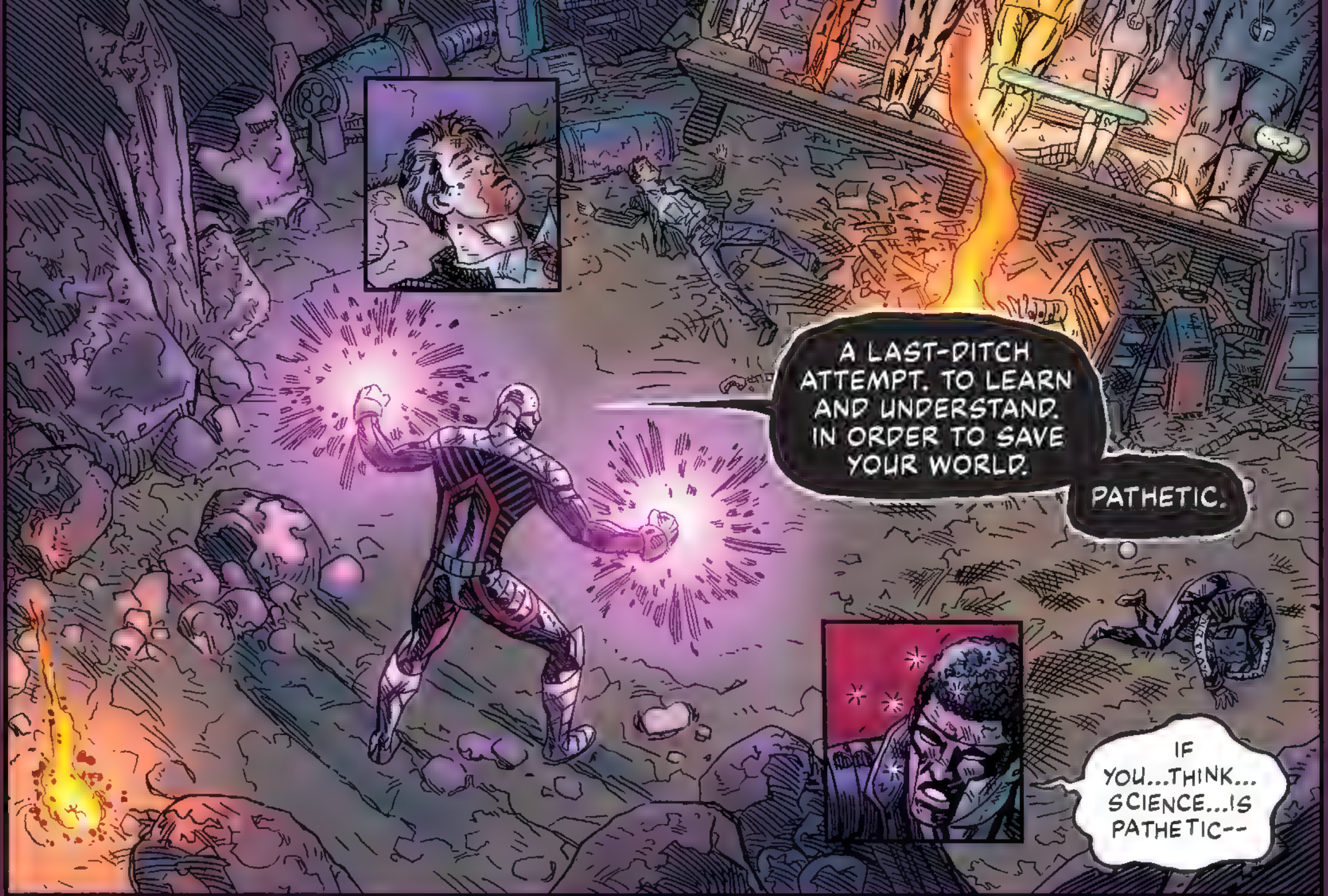
NOW, THIS ALTERNATE
VERSION OF ME GOES
BY THE NAME RA.

WHICH IS ALSO THE
PERIODIC SYMBOL
FOR RADIUM.

A RADIOACTIVE
ELEMENT.

UNSTABLE
ATOMS.





A LAST-DITCH
ATTEMPT. TO LEARN
AND UNDERSTAND.
IN ORDER TO SAVE
YOUR WORLD.

PATHETIC.

IF
YOU...THINK...
SCIENCE...IS
PATHETIC--

NO, NOT
SCIENCE--

"--YOUR
HOPE."

BUT IT
DOESN'T MATTER
ANYMORE.

EVERYTHING
ENDS.

YOU'RE
RIGHT,
RA--

FAHRR



--IT
DOES.

SLAM!



THAT...WOW.
OKAY. HAVE YOU
EVER GROWN THAT
BIG BEFORE?

NO!
NEVER!

AND
HONESTLY, I
SHOULDN'T BE
ABLE TO!

BUT,
SOMETHING
ABOUT HIS
RADIATION
BLAST...
HUH.

"HUH"?



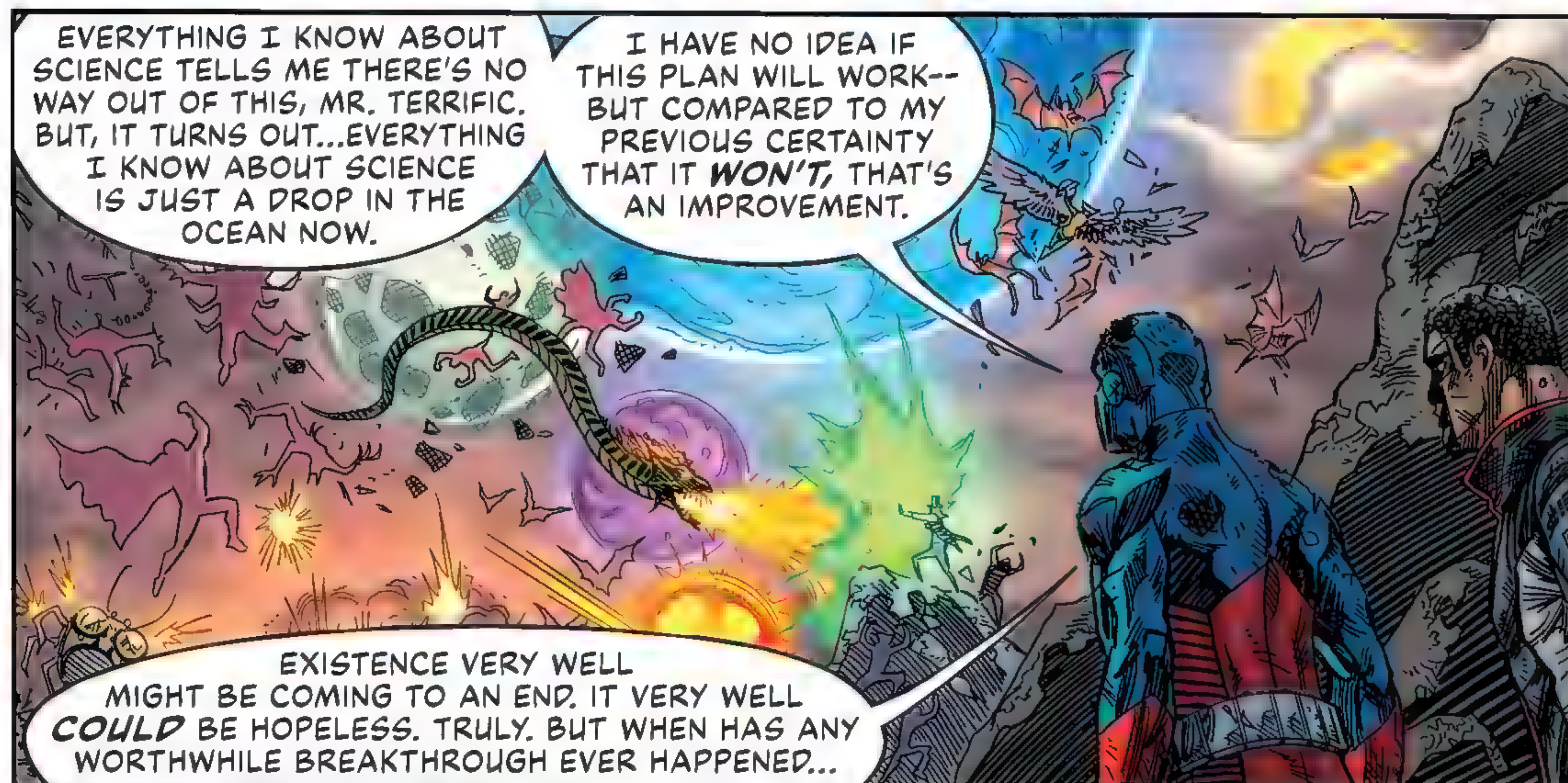
JUST THAT... I
FORGOT WHAT
IT FEELS LIKE
TO BE ON THE
EDGE OF THE
UNKNOWN.

TO
HAVE IT FEEL SO
OVERWHELMING AND
UNKNOWABLE.

TO
FEEL SO...
SMALL. I
FORGOT...



...HOW
EXCITING
IT IS.



EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT
SCIENCE TELLS ME THERE'S NO
WAY OUT OF THIS, MR. TERRIFIC.
BUT, IT TURNS OUT...EVERYTHING
I KNOW ABOUT SCIENCE
IS JUST A DROP IN THE
OCEAN NOW.

I HAVE NO IDEA IF
THIS PLAN WILL WORK--
BUT COMPARED TO MY
PREVIOUS CERTAINTY
THAT IT **WON'T**, THAT'S
AN IMPROVEMENT.

EXISTENCE VERY WELL
MIGHT BE COMING TO AN END. IT VERY WELL
COULD BE HOPELESS. TRULY. BUT WHEN HAS ANY
WORTHWHILE BREAKTHROUGH EVER HAPPENED...



...IF PEOPLE GAVE UP
WHEN IT SEEMED
HOPELESS?

COME
ON, GUYS.
LET'S MAKE
SOME **METAL**
MEN.

END

HOW DID THIS GET
WORSE THAN ANYTHING
I COULD'VE IMAGINED?

SEEING HER...I
WANT TO SCREAM,
BUT I WON'T...

HO--LY...
MS. LA...LA...
LANE, HOW DID WE...
WHERE ARE WE...
WAIT...

...IS THAT
YOU?

LANE...
HOW ARE
YOU...?

PERRY,
TAKE JIMMY...
AND RUN.



BUT,
MS. LANE,
YOU'RE--

GO!

I TOLD THEM TO
RUN...BUT WHERE CAN
ANYONE RUN TO NOW?

NO MORE SUPERHEROES!

NO MORE SUPERHEROES!

SUPERHERO-FREE AMERICA

THE DAILY PLAN

ESPECIALLY
FROM...


**NO MORE
SUPERHEROES**

REGINE SAWYER **WRITER** ALITHA MARTINEZ **PENCILLER**

MARK MORALES **INKER** EMILIO LOPEZ **COLORIST**

TOM NAPOLITANO **LETTERER**

...ME.



TAKE
ME TO THE
HIGHEST PEAK! I
WANT TO SEE THE
DESTRUCTION.

THAT IS
ENOUGH.

MAXIMA?
HOW DID YOU...?
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING *HERE*?

MY
IMPRISONMENT
WAS OVERTURNED. OUR
WORLD IS IN SHAMBLES...
I WAS NEEDED, SO
I CAME. WE NEED TO
GET YOU FAR FROM
HERE, LOIS.

NO...
NO--TAKE ME
TO WHERE *SHE*
IS. I HAVE TO
KNOW...

KNOW?
KNOW
WHAT?!

IF SHE...
I...DID...WHAT
I THINK...

I KNEW
YOU'D COME, LOIS.
YOU...*WE* CAN'T HELP
OURSELVES. BUT
I'M NOT DISCUSSING
ANYTHING WITH
HER AROUND.

THIS WAS A
BAD IDEA.

FWASH

MAXIMA, LET'S--
NOOOOOO!

PARTNERING WITH
MAXIMA OF ALL PEOPLE,
LOIS? I THOUGHT I'D BE
SMARTER THAN THAT ON
THIS *EARTH*. BUT I GUESS
SOME THINGS NEVER
CHANGE...

→HURK←
SHE...SHE...
CAME OUT...OF
NOWHERE...
I...

DO YOU
REALLY THINK THAT WAS
A COINCIDENCE? WE'RE ALL
REFLECTIONS OF OUR
OWN CREATION.

MY MIND IS SCREAMING, BUT
I WON'T LET IT HIT MY LIPS.

ON MY EARTH,
SUPERHEROES
WERE A **MENACE...**
GENETIC ABOMINATIONS
THINKING THEY WERE
ABOVE US.

I WROTE A
SERIES OF ARTICLES
ABOUT IT--THEY **SPREAD**
ACROSS THE WORLD. MAXIMA
WAS A S.T.A.R. LAB SCIENTIST,
AND MY SOURCE. WE WERE
EXPOSING THEM FOR
WHAT THEY TRULY
ARE.

UNTIL
SHE GAVE
HERSELF
POWERS...

HER WORDS...

...MY WORDS...
HAVE HAUNTED ME...
FOR YEARS...

...**FEARFUL** WORDS I'VE
NEVER WRITTEN DOWN...
BUT CONSIDERED...

...SHE TOOK
HIM ON--**SUPERMAN**.
FIGHTING HIM IN THE MIDDLE
OF METROPOLIS...THEY BURNED
DOWN THE **DAILY PLANET**,
DESTROYED A MUSEUM
FULL OF CHILDREN ON
A SCHOOL TRIP.

I'M RELIVING THE MOST
NIGHTMARISH **DÉJÀ VU...**
MAXIMA...PEOPLE DYING...

MY SON,
JON, WAS ON THAT
TRIP, AND I WAS BURIED
UNDER THE BURNING BRICKS
OF THE **PLANET...**I SURVIVED.
HE DIDN'T. NEITHER DID
MAXIMA. SHE DIED IN
THE BATTLE.

SUPERMAN
WENT ON AN **APOLOGY**
TOUR. HIS LAST STOP...WAS
WITH ME. AN INTERVIEW.
HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HIT
HIM WHEN I PULLED OUT A
PARTING GIFT MADE BY
MAXIMA--**AMBER**
KRYPTONITE.

IT
ABSORBED ALL
OF HIS POWERS,
KILLED HIM...

...THEN I
CUT HIS DAMN
HEAD OFF!

KILLING CLARK...
MY SON...SHE'S MY
DARKEST NIGHTMARE
COME TRUE...

IS THIS YOUR EARTH? IT'S BURNING BECAUSE OF YOUR SUPERHERO PROBLEM...

...BECAUSE YOUR PEOPLE TRUSTED THEM, AND NOW LOOK...

IF YOU TRULY ARE ME, YOU'VE THOUGHT AT LEAST ONCE OF THE POSSIBILITY THAT THEY'D GO ROGUE.

I HAVE...ONCE TOO OFTEN.

AND WHEN ONE OF THEM DOES, THE REST WILL FOLLOW SOON ENOUGH. ON MY EARTH WE GOT RID OF THAT PROBABILITY RIGHT AFTER I **KILLED** SUPERMAN-- TOOK HIS POWERS AND GAVE PIECES OF THE KRYPTONITE TO MY PEOPLE.

HOW COULD I BECOME THIS? NEVER THIS...YET...

A WORLD WITHOUT HEROES IS A SAFE WORLD


I CAN HELP YOU RIGHT THE WRONG, LOIS.

YOU CAN SAVE YOURSELF FOR ONCE...

...AND EVERYONE YOU LOVE. I'M GOING TO GIVE YOU THAT CHANCE.

YOU'VE BEEN SO **QUIET**... MULLING OVER YOUR CHOICES, OR ARE YOU SAVING YOUR VOICE TO CALL HIM TO **SAVE** YOU? CALL HIM, THEN...

...SCREAM HIS NAME AND BRING HIM RIGHT TO ME. LET ME **HELP** YOU MAKE IT RIGHT.



I DON'T HAVE
TO SCREAM. IF I
MAKE THE SOFTEST
CRY, HE'LL STILL
HEAR ME.

HE KNOWS
ME...RIGHT DOWN TO
MY HEARTBEAT.

SCREAM!

CALLING HIM IS
KILLING HIM...IT'D
KILL US ALL...

...MY TRUTH ISN'T YOURS, LOIS...I
GET IT NOW. BUT THAT FEAR, THAT
SCREAM YOU WANT, BELONGS TO YOU
AND YOUR WORLD--NOT ME OR MINE.
WE CRY OUT FOR JUSTICE, HOPE...
THAT'S TRUE BRAVERY.

WHATEVER THE SACRIFICE
I HAVE TO MAKE...SO BE IT.
HE'S DONE IT FOR ME, FOR
US, TIME AND TIME AGAIN...

...IT'S NOW MY TURN, MY
TIME, TO BRING THAT TRUTH
TO POWER...NO MATTER THE
RISK OR THE COST.

YOU WANT ME TO SCREAM,
LOIS? NOT ME...NOT EVER...

END?

THEMYSCIRA. THE END TIMES.

WHEN I
BROUGHT
THIS TEAM
TOGETHER...

WHAT
ARE THESE
CREATURES,
BEAST
BOY?

BASH

NO CLUE,
STARFIRE.
FACES ONLY
A MOTHER
COULD LOVE,
THOUGH.

KILL FIRST,
QUESTIONS
LATER.

SSLUUURCH

...I NEVER
COULD HAVE
IMAGINED...

FALLING THROUGH
THE CRACKS

Writer: Che Grayson
Artist: Pop Mhan
Colorist: Chris Sotomayor
Letterer: ALW's Troy Peteri

IS IT ME
OR WAS
THAT TOO
EASY?

RASHLY

JACKSON'S
RIGHT.
SOMETHING'S
OFF.

...IT
WOULD
END
LIKE
THIS.

CRACK DOOM DOOM DOOM

HOW QUICKLY WE CAN LOSE EVERYTHING.

NO!

WHAT THE--

AH!

AAAAAAH!

OOF!

CRASH

THEY'RE FINALLY HERE.

WE'VE BEEN WAITING.

OUR FUTURES ARE FALLING THROUGH THE CRACKS BEFORE OUR VERY EYES.

WE NEVER SAW IT COMING.

STARFIRE

ROBIN

BEAST
BOY

RED
ARROW

AQUALAD

IN THE
END, EVIL
CHANGES
YOU.

RAVEN

GET
OFF
ME!

WATCH
OUT!

RAVEN

I KNOW THIS
ALL TOO WELL.

NNNH!

IT TURNS YOU INTO
SOMETHING
UNRECOGNIZABLE.

EVERYTHING YOU
ARE, WARPED
AND TWISTED INTO
A NIGHTMARE,
A SHATTERED
REFLECTION.

RAVEN,
JOIN US.

TRIGON!
I KNEW YOU
WERE BEHIND
THIS!

AND IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO LOOK AWAY.

CLOSE ENOUGH.

MEET MY TEEN TITANS, RAVEN.

RAVEN!

WE'VE COME TO YOU WITH A TRUE VISION.

NO!

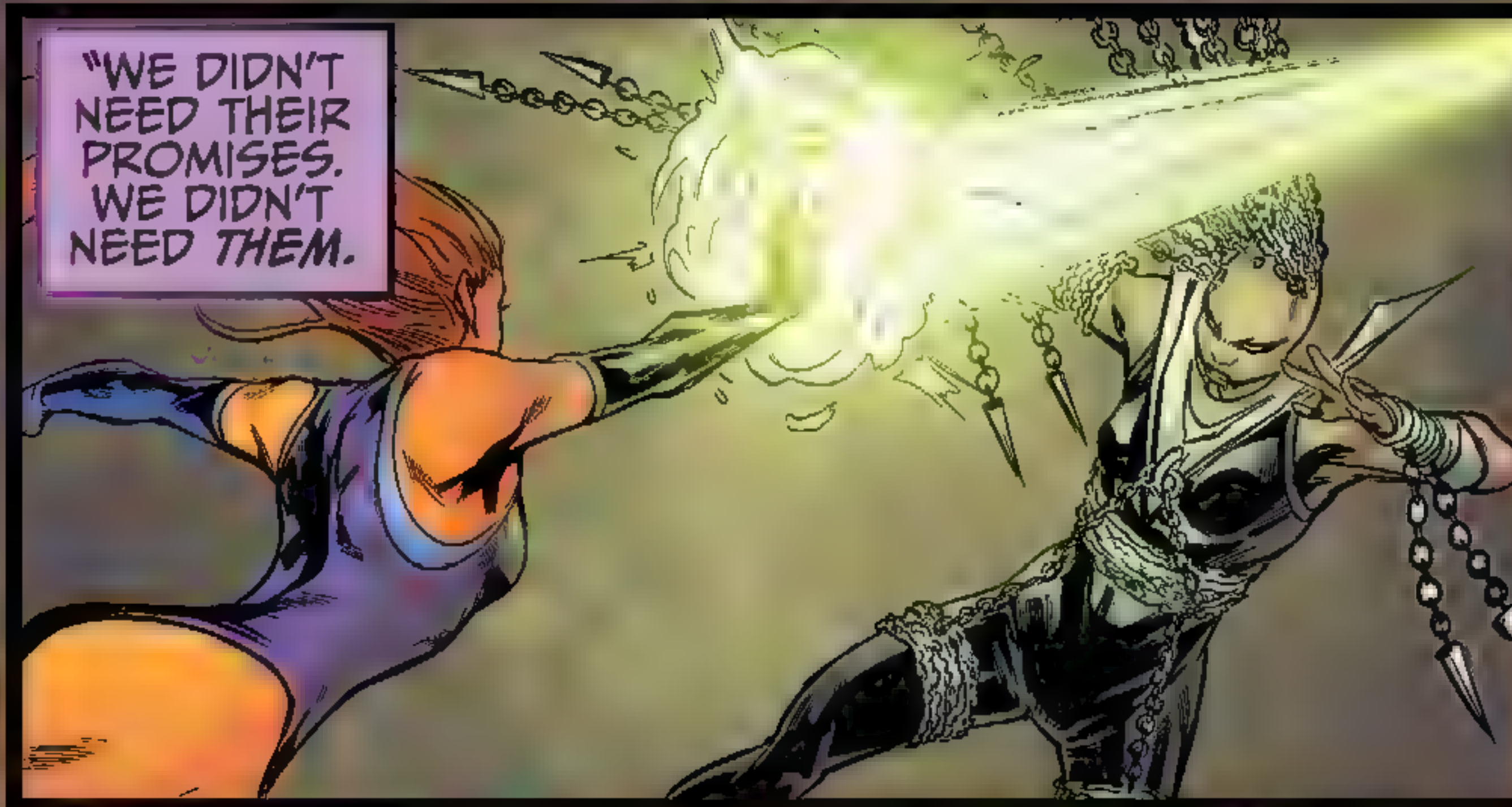
THIS IS HOW IT ENDS.





LEAVE THEM ALONE-- IT'S ME YOU WANT!

NO, WE WANT IT ALL. YOU SEE, ON OUR WORLD, WE KILLED YOUR HEROES.



"WE DIDN'T NEED THEIR PROMISES. WE DIDN'T NEED THEM."



"INSTEAD WE CHOSE TRIGON AND BECAME--"



"--MORE POWERFUL THAN YOU COULD EVER IMAGINE."

JOIN OUR NEW FUTURE, RAVEN. I'VE SEEN IT SO CLEARLY.

WE'D NEVER JOIN YOU.



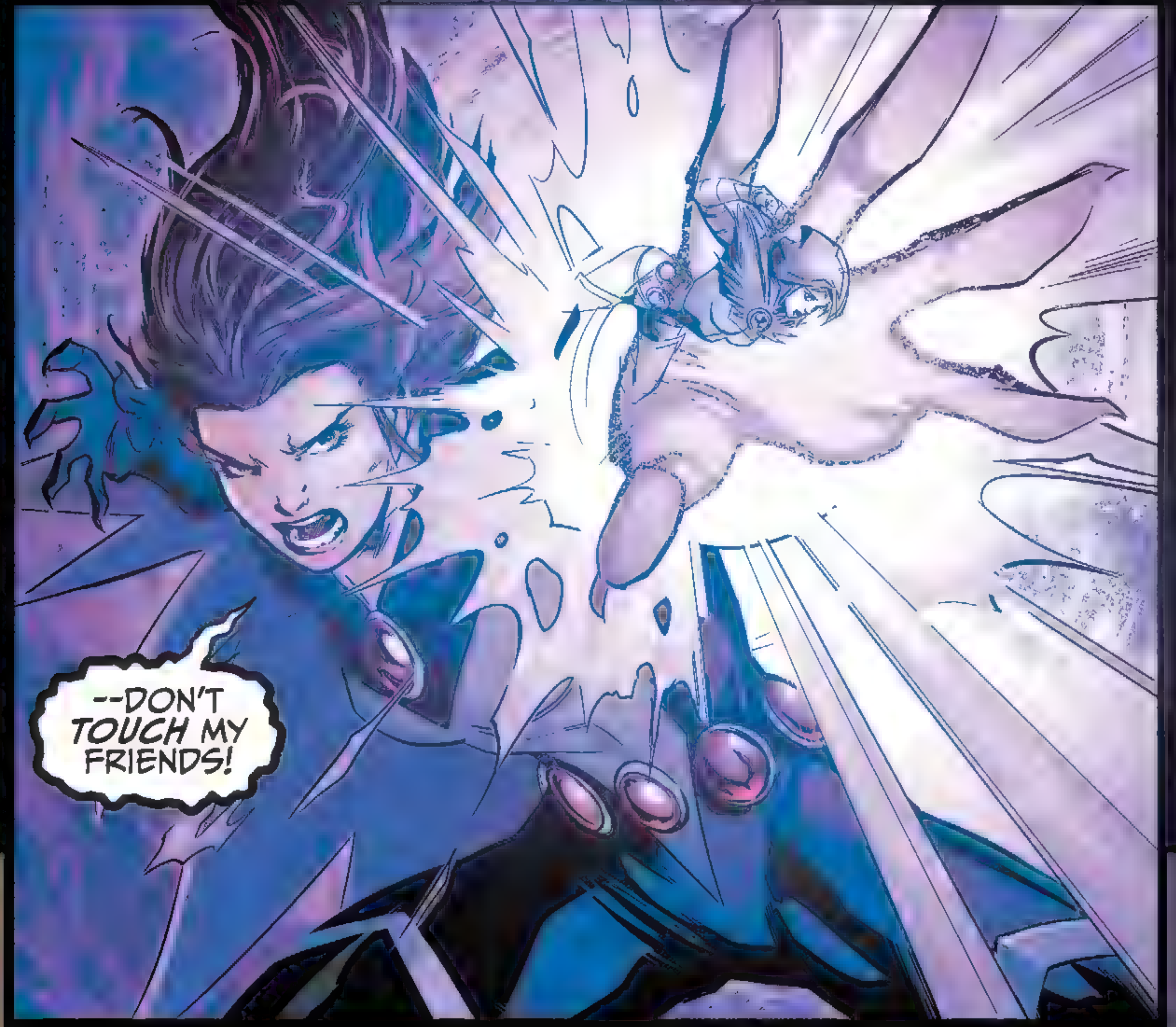
"YOU DON'T HAVE A CHOICE. THE WAR WILL SOON COME TO AN END..."


EVIL TEARS YOU APART.



"...AND WE WIN."

AND THEN IT GOES AFTER THE PEOPLE YOU LOVE.





I HAVE A LITTLE
STORY OF MY OWN.

I ONCE HAD
NOTHING AND
NO ONE BUT
THE SHADOWS
THAT TRIED
TO LEAD ME
ASTRAY.

THOSE SHADOWS
LIKE WHISPERS
WERE MY ONLY
COMPANIONS.

THEY TOLD ME TO
CHOOSE POWER
OVER HONOR.

TO CHOOSE
MY FATHER.

BUT THEN I FOUND
MY TRUE FAMILY.



YOU ARE WEAK. YOU ALWAYS WERE.



YOUR WORLD IS DEAD.

IT'S TIME TO COME BACK HOME AND LEAD YOUR TEAM TO THEIR TRUE DESTINY.

YOU MIGHT HAVE WON IN YOUR WORLD...

...BUT YOUR FUTURE ON *THIS* ONE DEPENDED ON ONE THING--

--THAT I'D EVER LET A SHADOW, A VICIOUS WHISPER, FIND A PLACE IN MY HEART.



SO TAKE YOUR TEAM AND YOUR SICK FUTURE BACK TO HELL!



I NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD END THIS WAY.



BUT I ALWAYS KNEW...



...OUR LIGHT WOULD LEAD THE WAY.

END

THE HELLSCAPE. FORMERLY KNOWN AS THEMYSIRA.

THIS I KNOW
FOR CERTAIN--

THERE ALWAYS MUST
BE A MACHINE TO RUN--
FREEZING METAL GEARS
FOR TEETH, ICE WATER
IN ITS VEINS.

THAT IS THE WAY
CIVILIZATION
SURVIVES.

DESTROY THAT COLD, COLD
MACHINE...AND WHAT
DOES THE PENGUIN
HAVE LEFT?

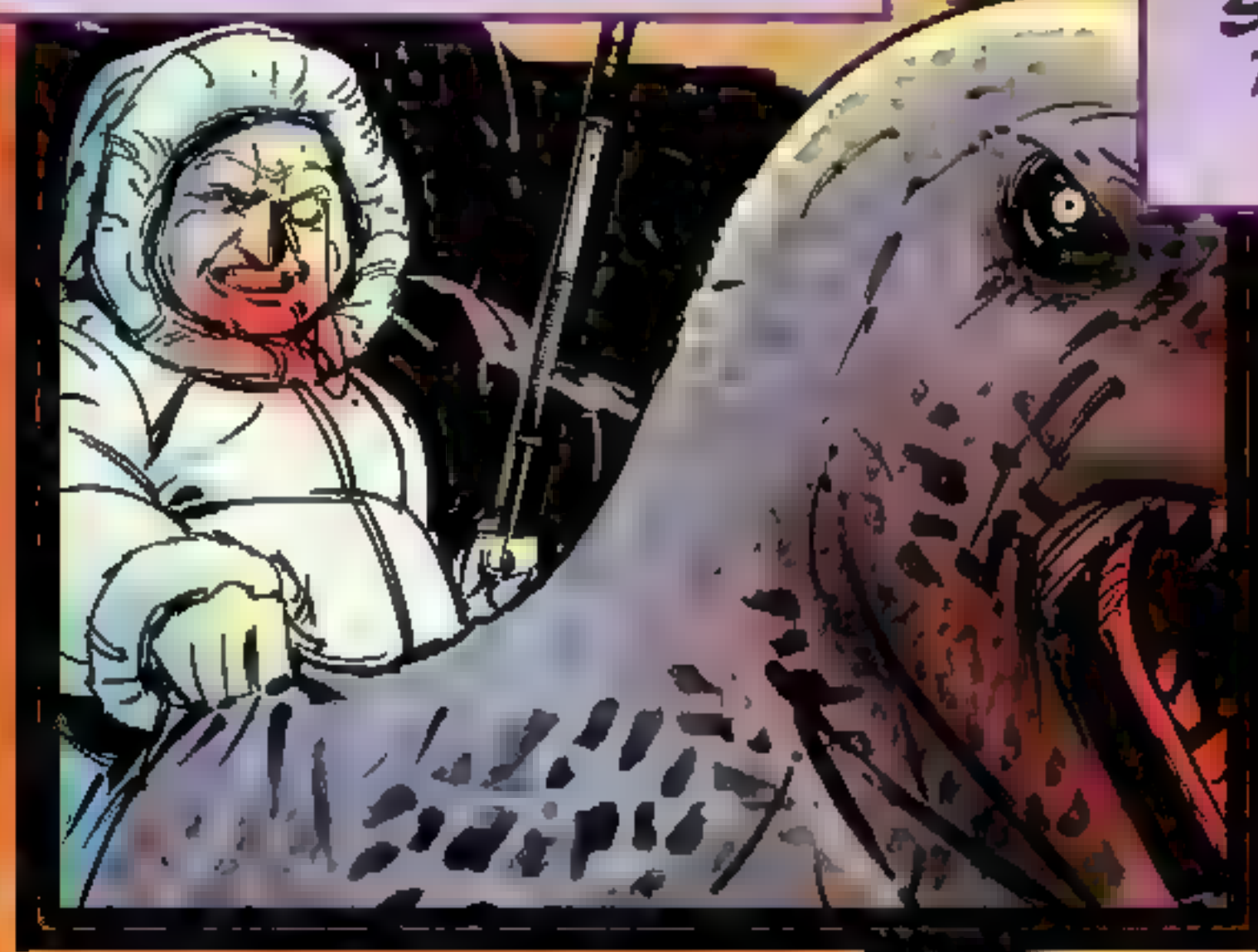
IS THIS REALLY
WHAT I AM, OUT
THERE, ELSEWHERE?

I, THE MOST CULTIVATED,
THE MOST CULTURED, THE MOST
AFFLUENT, ARTICULATE, SUAVE,
INTELLIGENT, WELL-FED, AND
COSMOPOLITAN OF ALL--

--IS THIS WHAT
THE PENGUIN IS, IN
ALL THOSE NASTY LITTLE
CESSPITS YOU CALL
WORLDS?



ONE WHO TOOK PLEASURE IN TURNING ON THE ONLY CREATURES THAT HAD ADORED HIM--THOSE EVEN WEAKER THAN HIMSELF.



AND ONE WHO NEVER GREW BEYOND THE SWOLLEN, SMOTHERING, SUFFOCATING NEED TO BE REUNITED WITH HIS PARENTS...

ONE WHO FORSOOK HIS APPETITE, AND FEASTED INSTEAD ON SOMETHING I SHAKE TO DESCRIBE.

...EVEN IF IT MEANT ABSORBING THEM INTO HIS VERY FLESH.

THIS WILL NOT STAND!

I'M NOT GOING TO HAVE MY LEGACY--**EVERYTHING I HAVE BUILT!**--SLOPPED OVER BY A **BOGEYMAN**, A **SADIST**, AND A SUETY, SUPPURATING, OEDIPAL **FREAK**.

THEN TELL US, LITTLE PENGUIN...



...



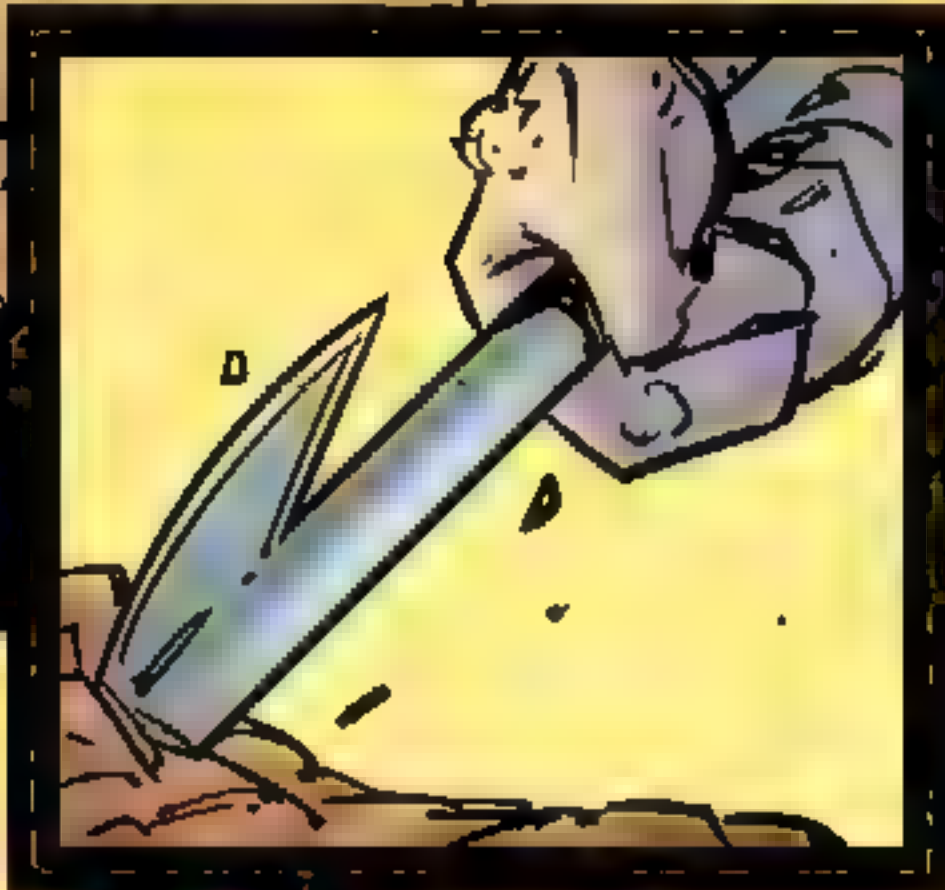
...WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?



NO MATTER WHO OR WHAT
CAME AND WENT, IN THE
OLD DAYS...I STAYED.

NO MATTER WHO FOUGHT
OR KILLED OR DIED OVER THIS
SCRAP OF TERRITORY, OR
THAT BANK VAULT, OR
THIS PURE IDEAL, OR THAT
DEAD BROAD...

...I REMAINED
IN POWER.



EARTHQUAKES, PLAGUES,
VICTIMS, AND VILLAINS,
THEY COME AND GO LIKE
SEASONS--

--BUT WHO KEPT
CIVILIZATION ALIVE?



ME.


I KEPT THE WHEELS
TURNING. I REBUILT
THE MACHINE
WHEN I HAD TO.



I'LL LIE
DOWN WITH WHAT-
EVER STRANGE
BEDFELLOWS
I MUST...

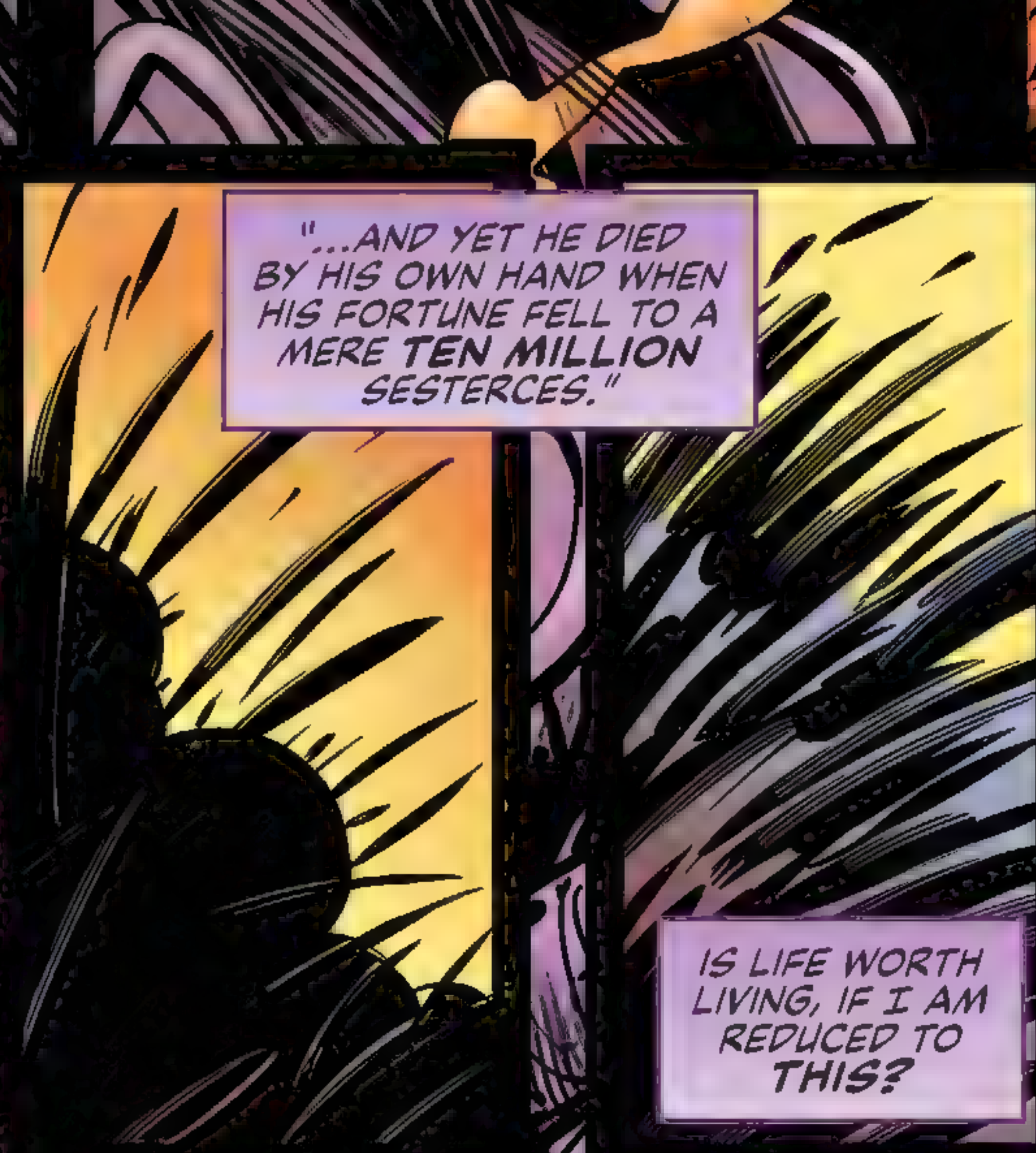


...TO
PROTECT THAT
WONDERFUL
MACHINE.




CRUSHED INSIDE HIS
SUPPURATING, IRRADIATED,
MUTANT FLESH, I THINK,
ABSURDLY...

...**"APICIUS
THE GLUTTON WAS
THE RICHEST MAN IN
ROME, RICHER EVEN
THAN THE EMPEROR...**



**"...AND YET HE DIED
BY HIS OWN HAND WHEN
HIS FORTUNE FELL TO A
MERE TEN MILLION
SESTERCES."**

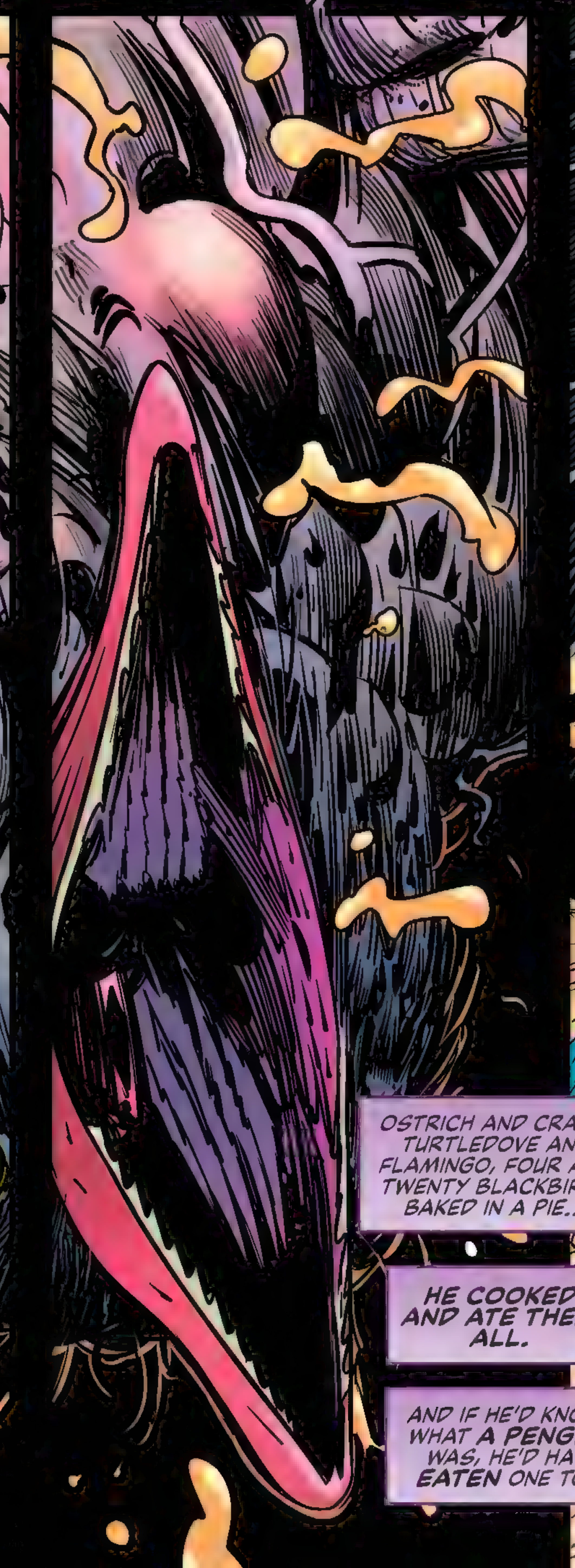
**IS LIFE WORTH
LIVING, IF I AM
REDUCED TO
THIS?**



**BUT A MICROBE
WILL THRIVE ON EVEN
THE MOST BARREN
ROCK...**

**...BECAUSE DEEP WITHIN
ITS CELLS, ITS MOST
PRIMAL COMMANDS, IS
THE KNOWLEDGE THAT
ONE DAY...IT MIGHT
BECOME APICIUS.**

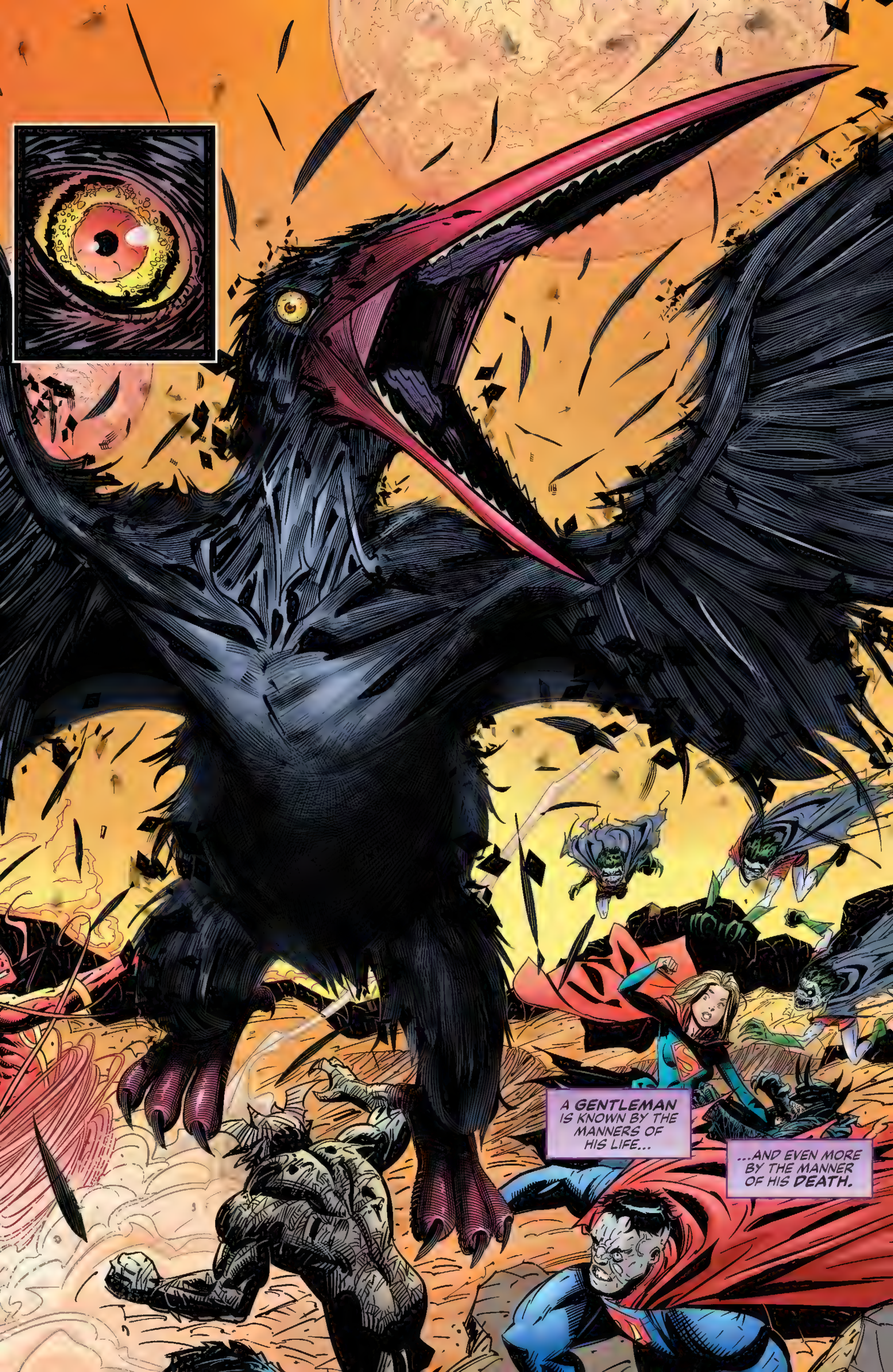
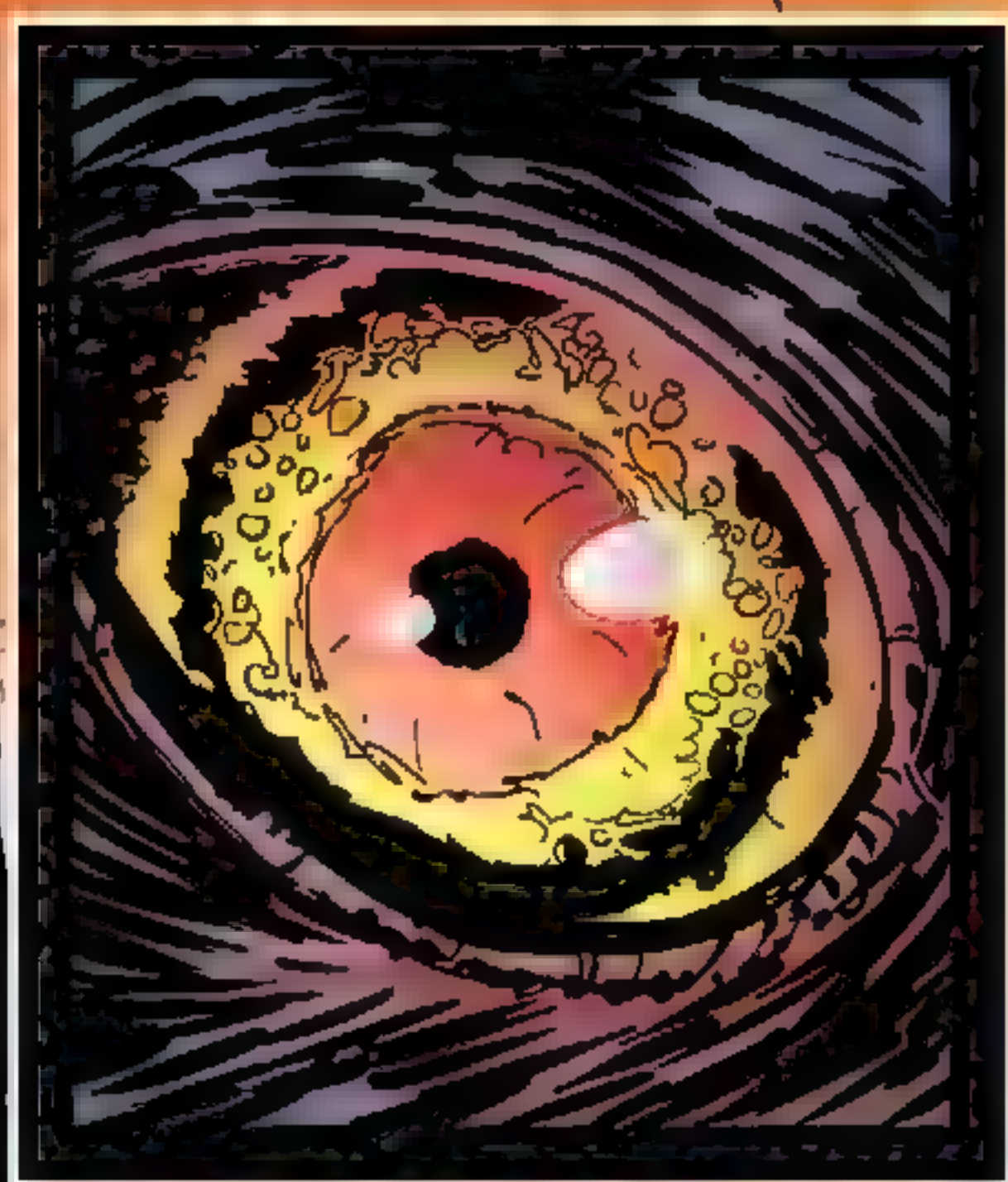
**HE WAS A COOK,
YOU KNOW, APICIUS.
WROTE ONE OF THE
EARLIEST COOKBOOKS
TO EVER COME DOWN
THE AGES TO US HERE,
AT THE END OF
ALL THINGS.**



**OSTRICH AND CRANE,
TURTLEDOVE AND
FLAMINGO, FOUR AND
TWENTY BLACKBIRDS
BAKED IN A PIE...**

**HE COOKED
AND ATE THEM
ALL.**

**AND IF HE'D KNOWN
WHAT A PENGUIN
WAS, HE'D HAVE
EATEN ONE TOO.**



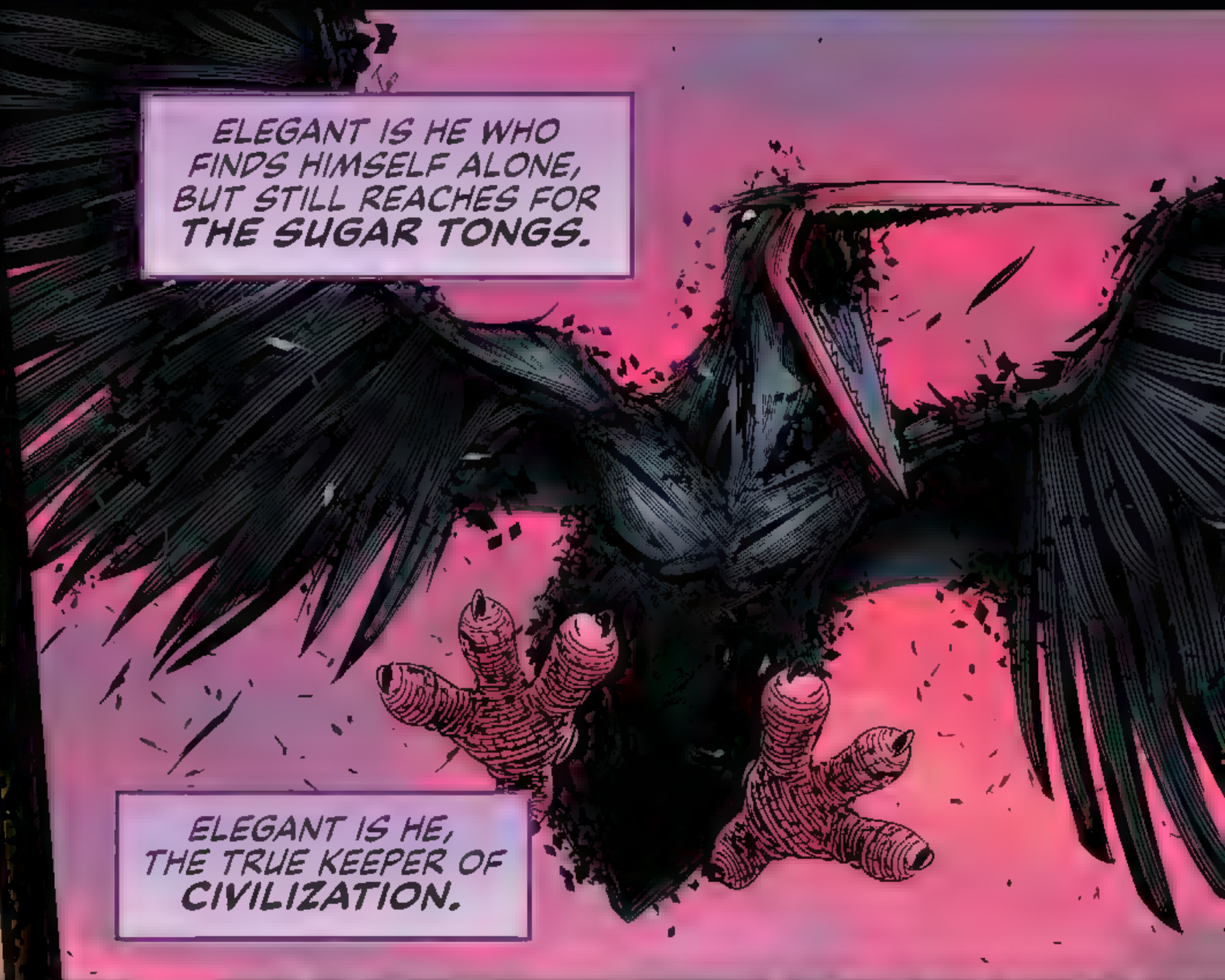
A GENTLEMAN
IS KNOWN BY THE
MANNERS OF
HIS LIFE...

...AND EVEN MORE
BY THE MANNER
OF HIS DEATH.



ONE LAST
SUPPER, FOR
OLD TIMES'
SAKE.

ONE LAST TOAST,
TO RING IN THE DARK
NEW YEAR.



ELEGANT IS HE WHO
FINDS HIMSELF ALONE,
BUT STILL REACHES FOR
THE SUGAR TONGS.

ELEGANT IS HE,
THE TRUE KEEPER OF
CIVILIZATION.

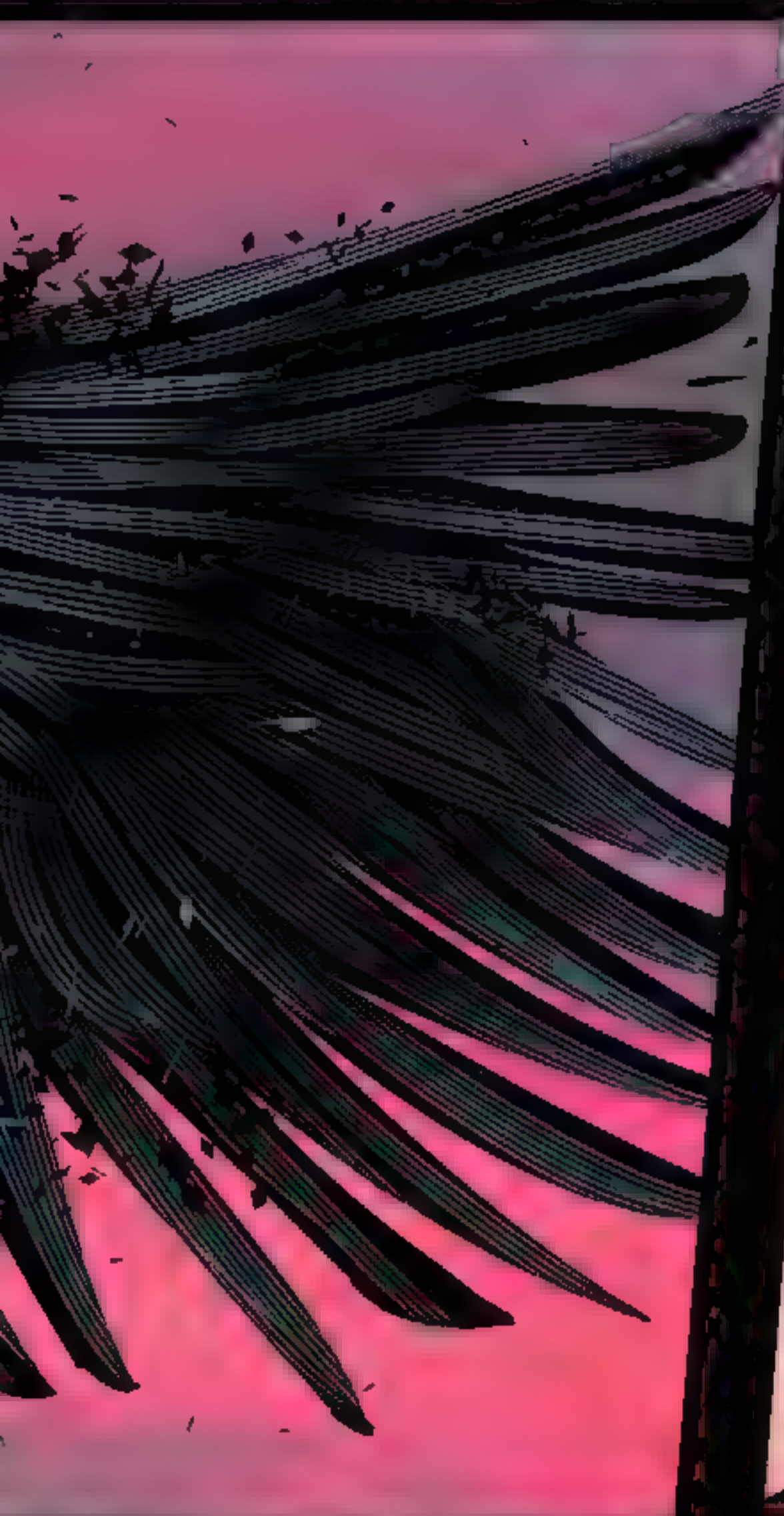


DUCHESS POTATOES
DROOLING BUTTER,
OOZING GARLIC.



AND TO DRINK--

--(ICE WATER
ICE WATER ICE
WATER ICE)--



FILET MIGNON,
PITTSBURGH BLACK
AND BLUE.



QUIVERING PINK LAMB
CHOPS, SHINING WITH
MINT JELLY.



--CHAMPAGNE.



THEY ASK, WHAT
COULD A CREATURE
LIKE ME DO IN A
BATTLE LIKE THIS?



WHATEVER I NEED
TO DO...

...IN ORDER TO
SURVIVE.

APICIUS

WRITER: MARGUERITE BENNETT

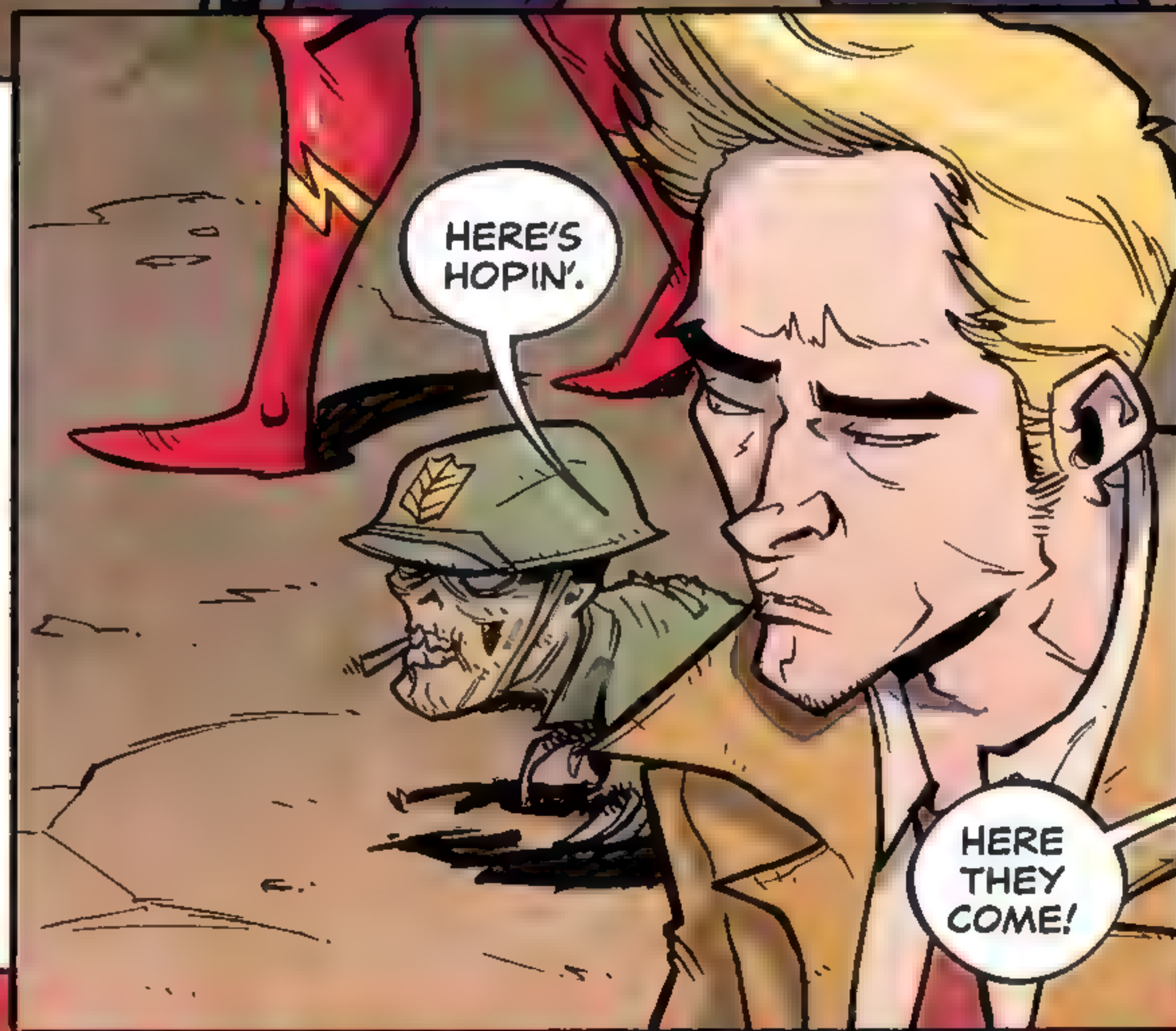
ARTIST: INAKI MIRANDA

COLORIST: EVA DE LA CRUZ

LETTERER: CARLOS M. MANGUAL



END





OF COURSE THIS
ABSOLUTE *UNIT*
WANTS A GO AT
ME.

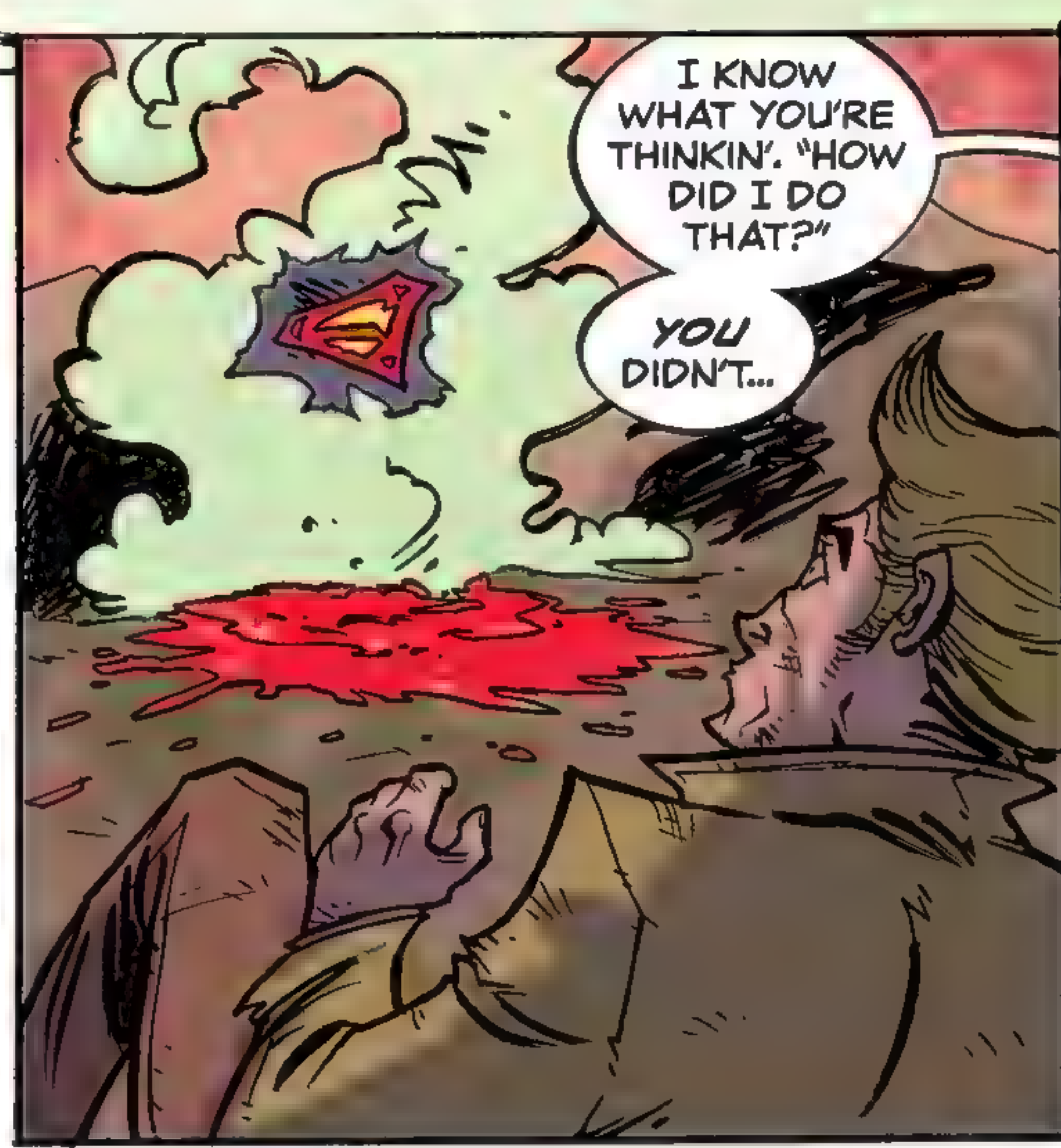


BLOODY
HELL!



HEH.
I KNEW HE
WASN'T THAT
BAD.

I know what you're
thinkin'. How did I do
that? You didn't...



I know what you're
thinkin'. How did I do
that?

YOU
DIDN'T...



...I DID.

OH, BOLLOCKS.



DID YOU REALLY THINK I WAS GONNA LET SOMEONE ELSE PUT YOU DOWN?

THAT PLEASURE'S GONNA BE ALL MINE, SUNSHINE.

A ROMANTIC, EH?



YOU'VE GOT NO CHANCE HERE, JOHNNY. YOU MIGHT HAVE FLIRTED WITH SOME DARK MAGICKS IN YOUR TIME.

I WENT ALL THE WAY.



I NOTICED.

ACK!

CRUNCH



FOR THAT, I'M GONNA REALLY TAKE MY TIME.



OKAY...OKAY... YOU WIN...

CAN I JUST HAVE...A FINAL REQUEST?

I'M NOT GONNA SHOW YOU ANY MERCY--

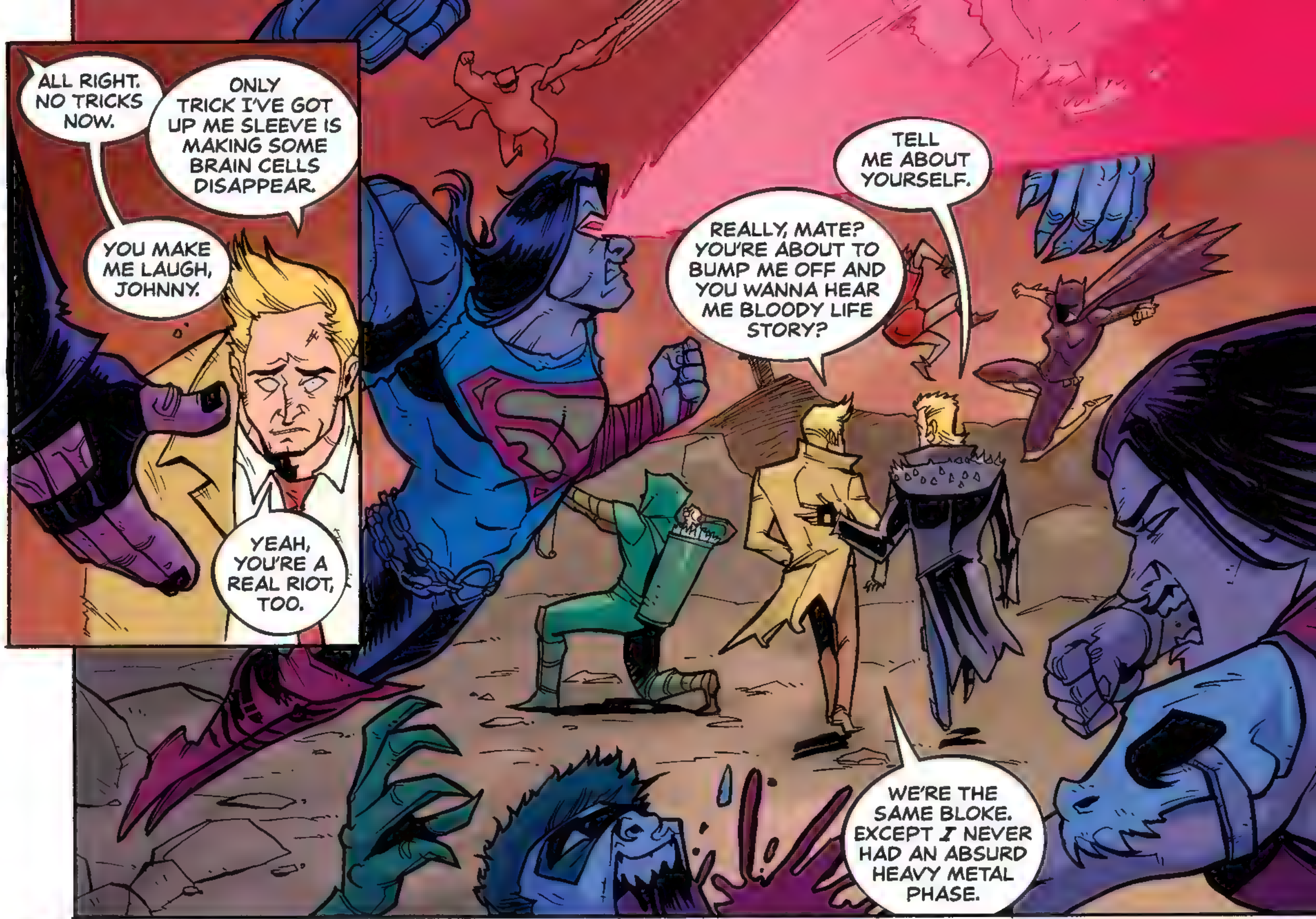
ONE LAST DRINK. GIVE ME THAT AND AFTERWARD YOU CAN FLAY ME AND MAKE A NEW QUILT FOR YOUR MUM FOR ALL I CARE, MATE.



DO WHAT NOW?

I SPOTTED A PUB NOT FAR FROM HERE. OR WHAT PASSES FOR ONE IN THIS TOILET.

HOW ABOUT WE DOWN A CHEEKY PINT, THEN YOU BLOW ME UP?



ALL RIGHT.
NO TRICKS
NOW.

ONLY
TRICK I'VE GOT
UP ME SLEEVE IS
MAKING SOME
BRAIN CELLS
DISAPPEAR.

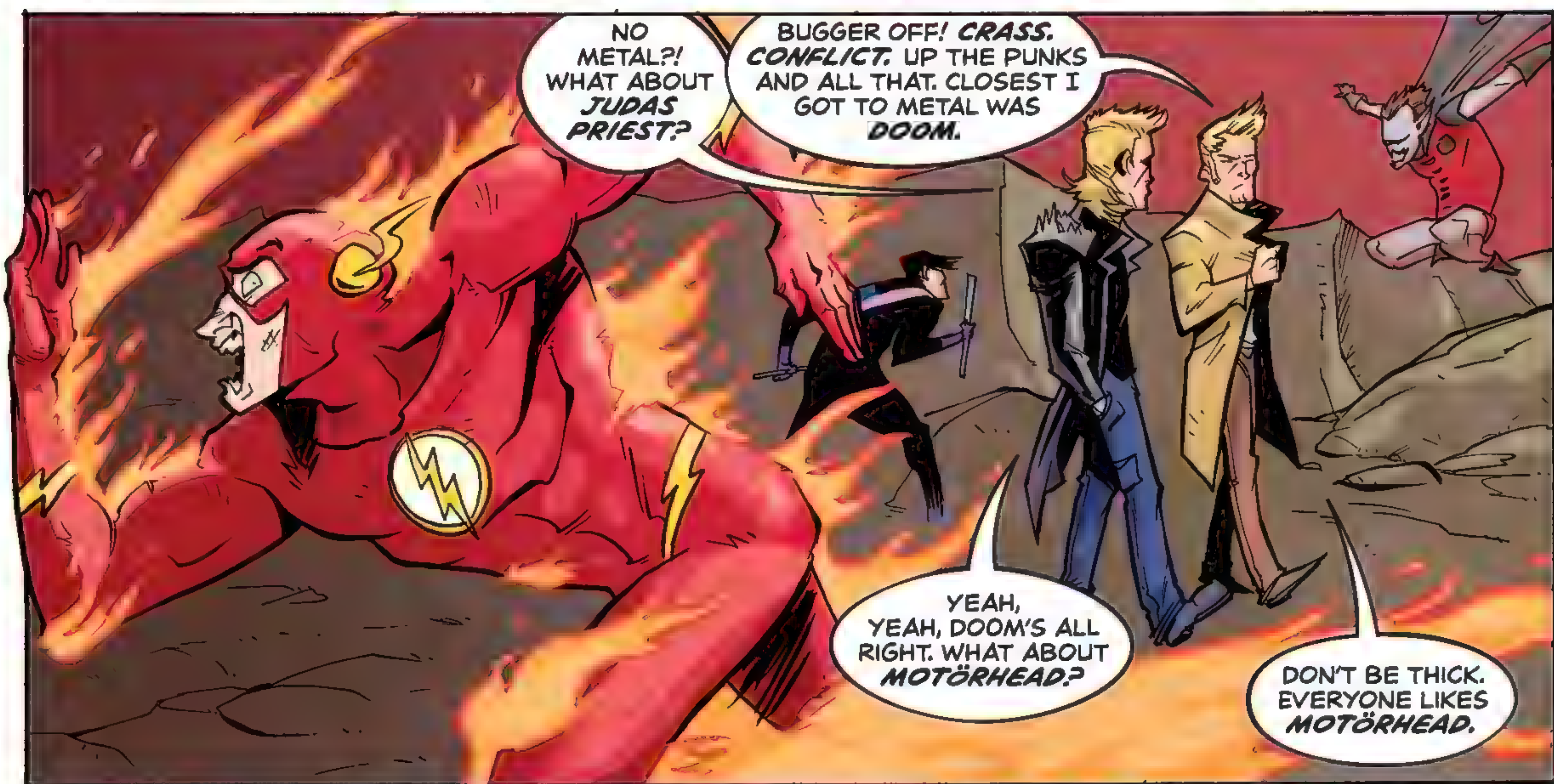
YOU MAKE
ME LAUGH,
JOHNNY.

YEAH,
YOU'RE A
REAL RIOT,
TOO.

TELL
ME ABOUT
YOURSELF.

REALLY, MATE?
YOU'RE ABOUT TO
BUMP ME OFF AND
YOU WANNA HEAR
ME BLOODY LIFE
STORY?

WE'RE THE
SAME BLOKE.
EXCEPT I NEVER
HAD AN ABSURD
HEAVY METAL
PHASE.

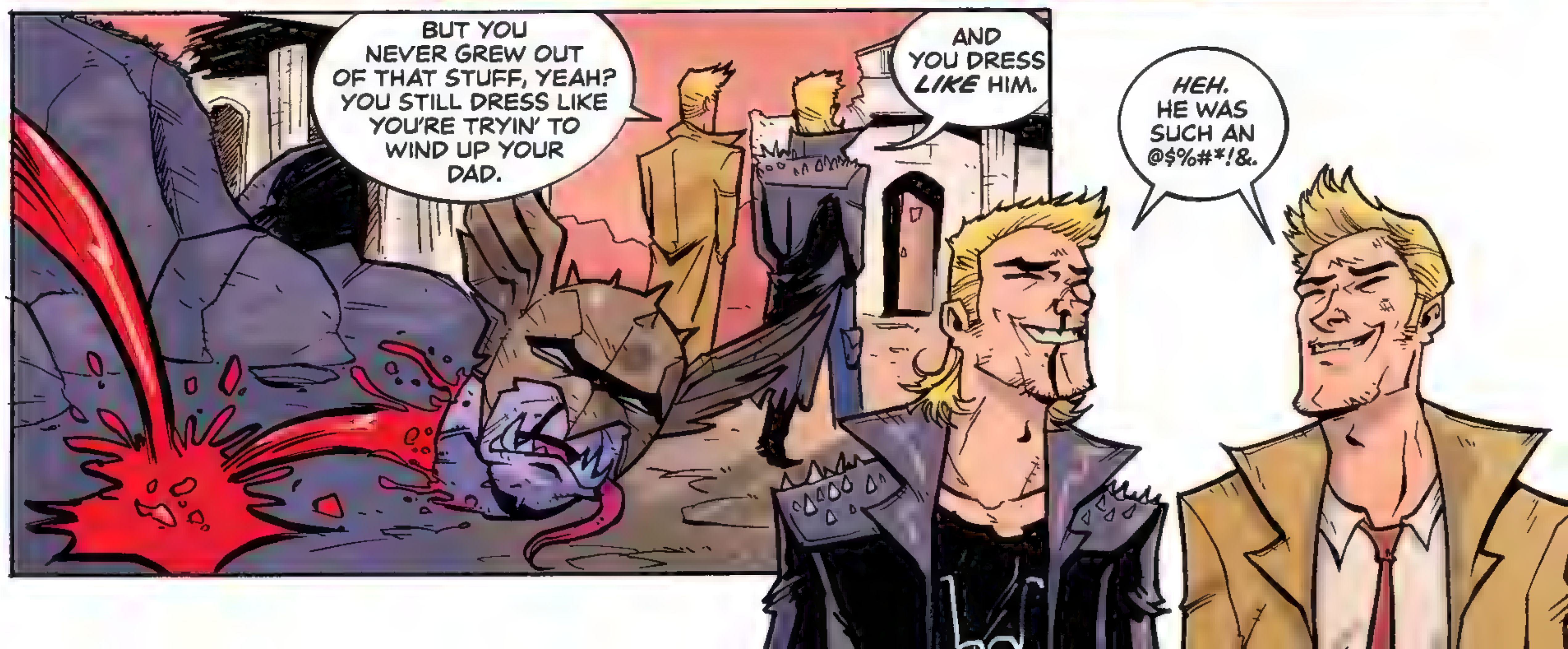


NO
METAL?!
WHAT ABOUT
*JUDAS
PRIEST?*

BUGGER OFF! *CRASS.*
CONFLICT. UP THE PUNKS
AND ALL THAT. CLOSEST I
GOT TO METAL WAS
DOOM.

YEAH,
YEAH, *DOOM'S* ALL
RIGHT. WHAT ABOUT
MOTÖRHEAD?

DON'T BE THICK.
EVERYONE LIKES
MOTÖRHEAD.



BUT YOU
NEVER GREW OUT
OF THAT STUFF, YEAH?
YOU STILL DRESS
LIKE YOU'RE TRYIN' TO
WIND UP YOUR
DAD.

AND
YOU DRESS
LIKE HIM.

HEH.
HE WAS
SUCH AN
@%*!&.



YOU GOT A SPARE CIG ON YOU?

NAH. THINGS'LL KILL YOU.

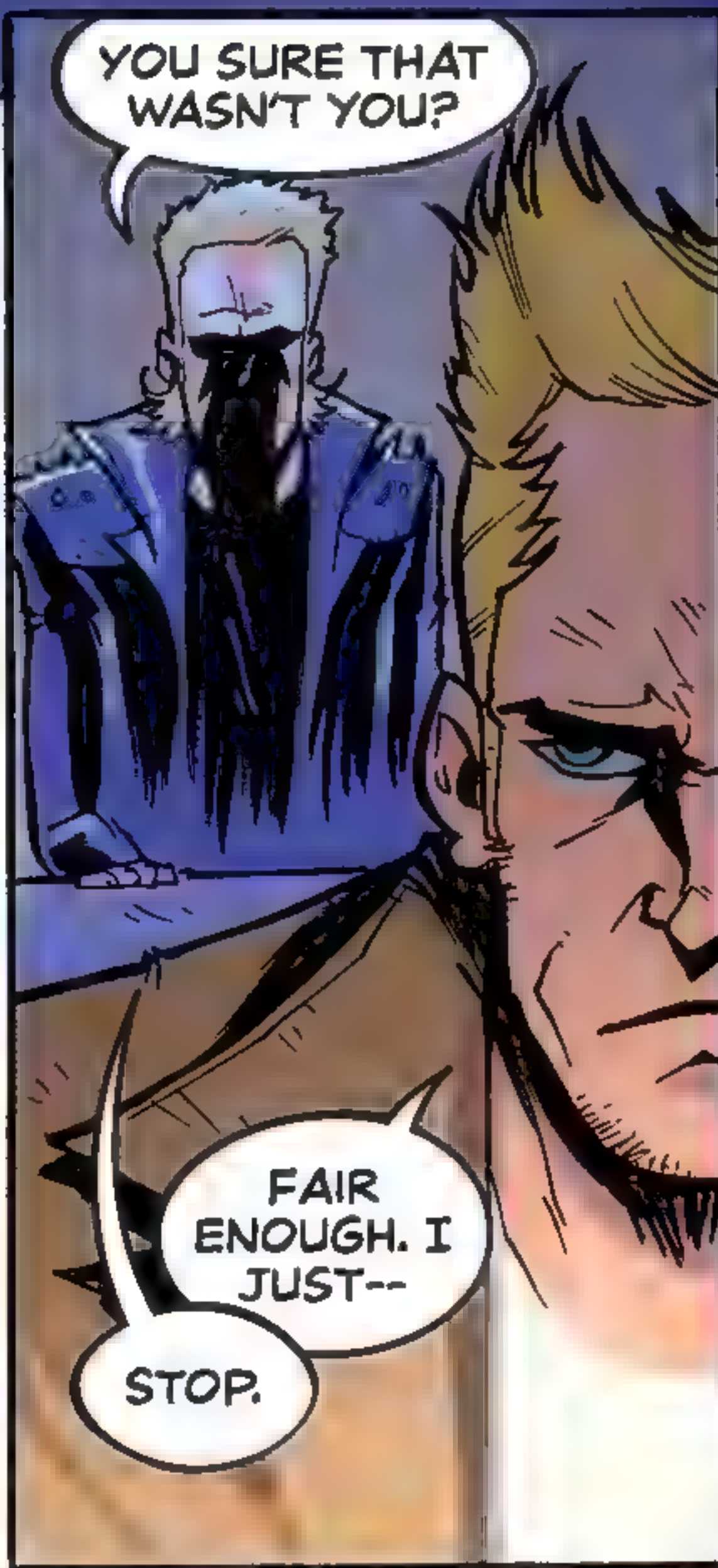
OH, YEAH. WHAT WAS I THINKIN'?



NO BEER FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS. THIS SHOULD DO THE TRICK THOUGH. ON THE ROCKS, YEAH?

YEAH.

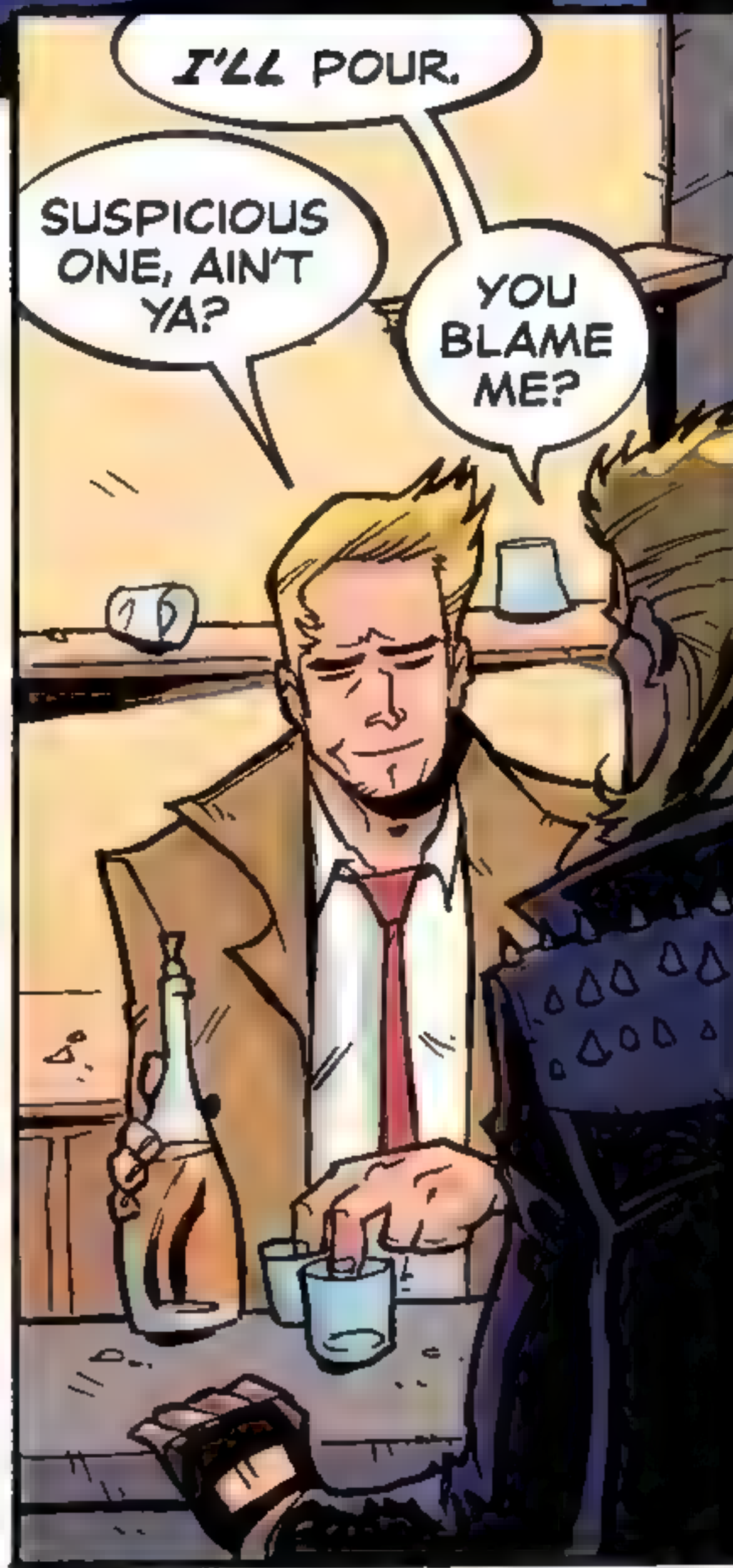
SO WE'RE BASICALLY THE SAME GUY, RIGHT? 'CEPT AT SOME POINT YOU CLEARLY WENT OFF THE RAILS.



YOU SURE THAT WASN'T YOU?

FAIR ENOUGH. I JUST--

STOP.



I'LL POUR.

SUSPICIOUS ONE, AIN'T YA?

YOU BLAME ME?



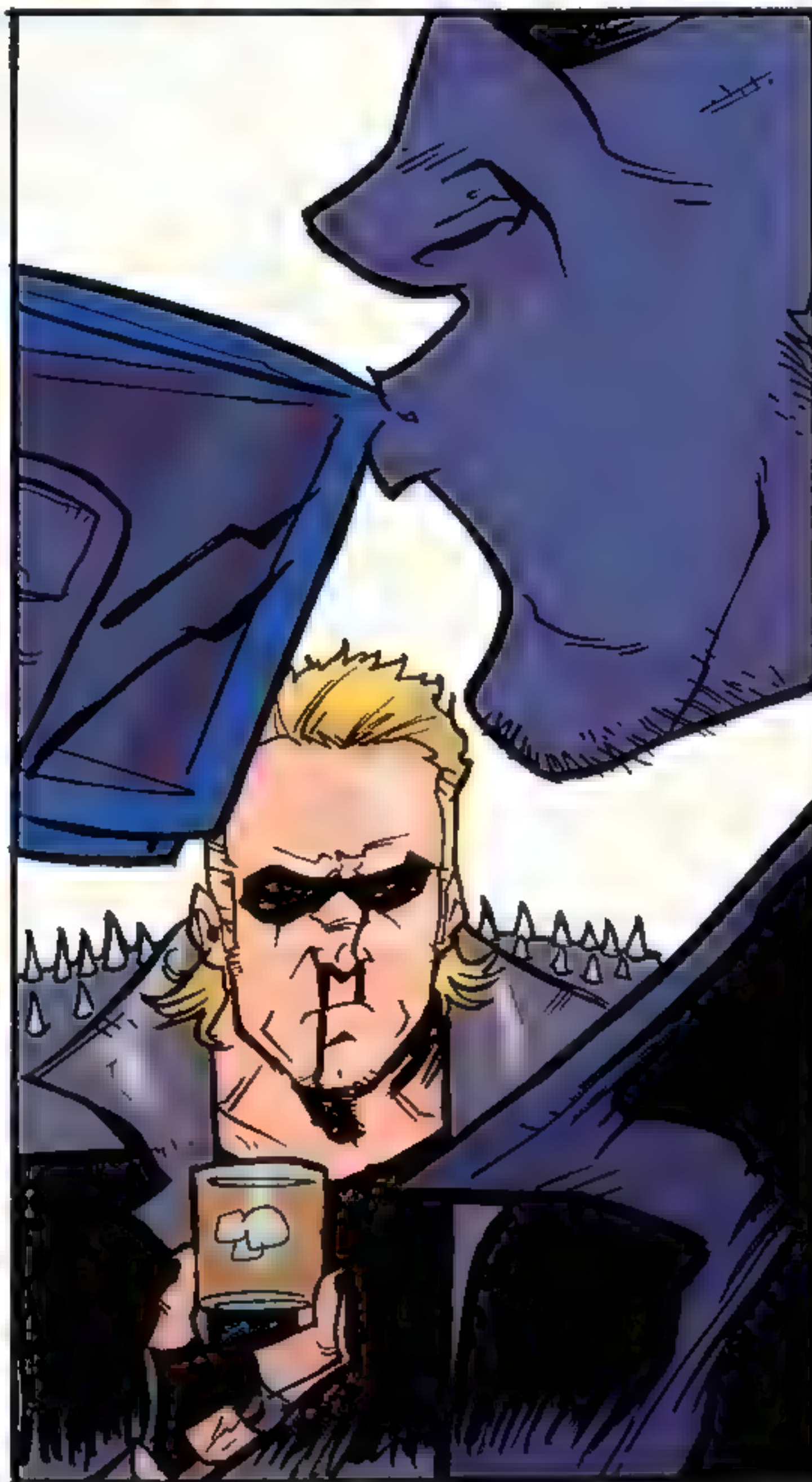
YOU TAKE YOURS NEAT?

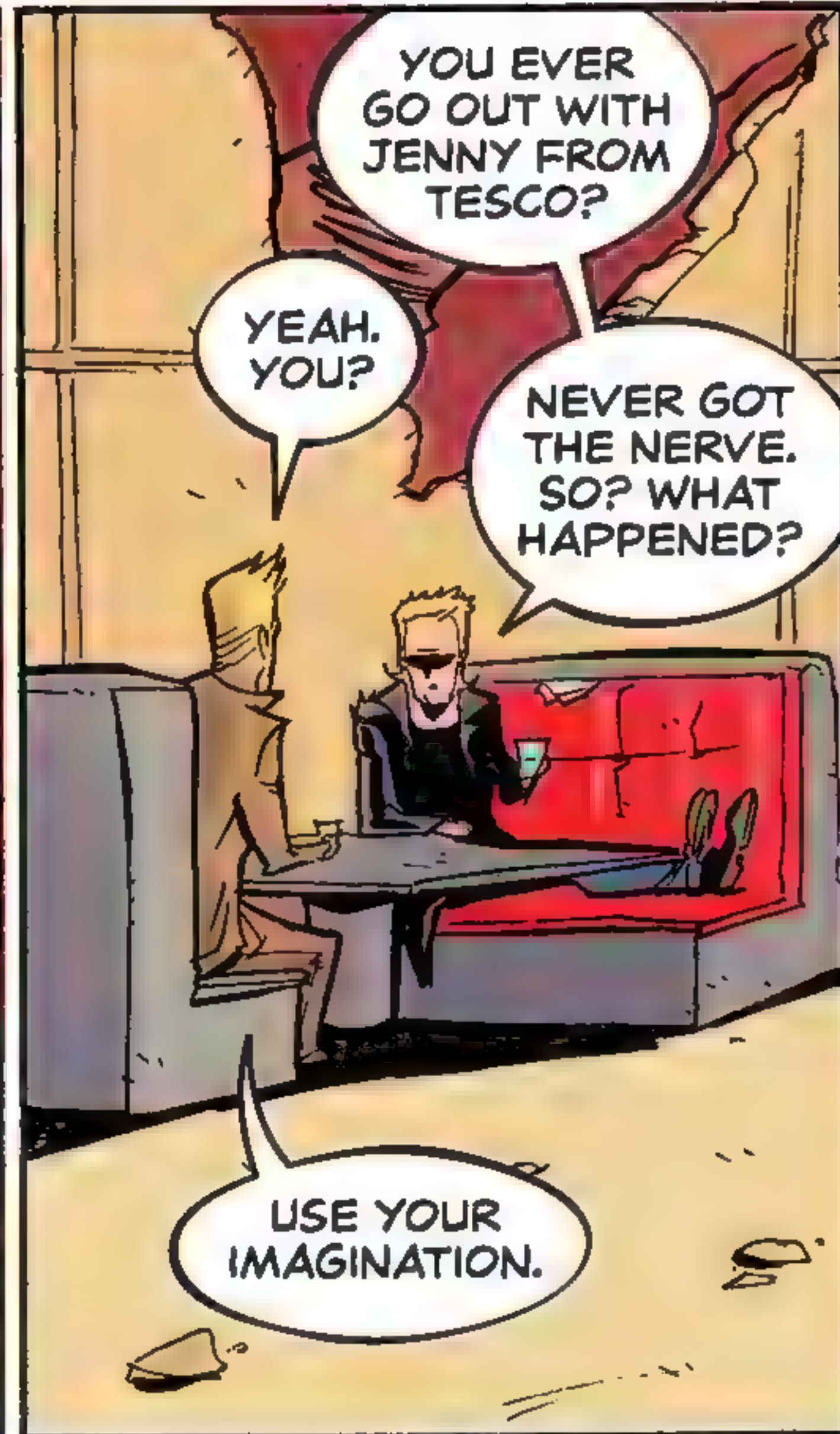
ALWAYS.

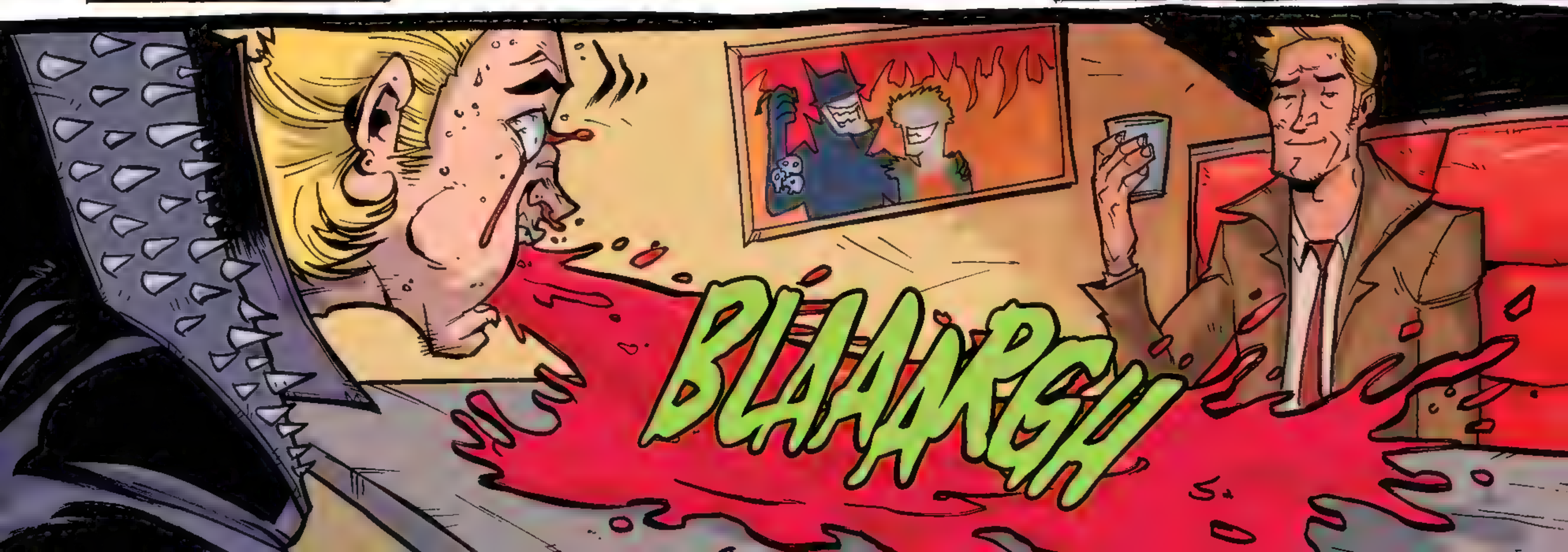
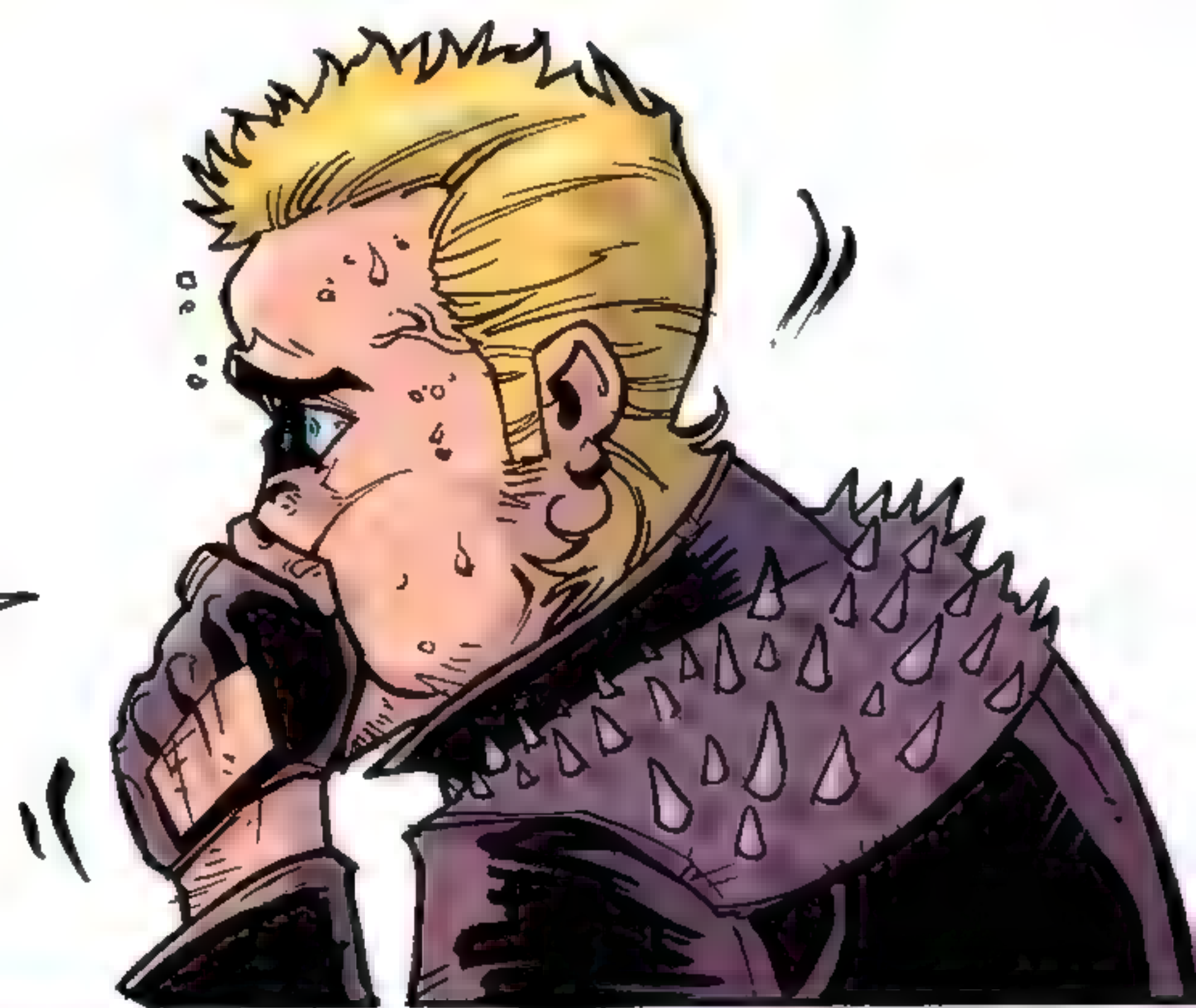
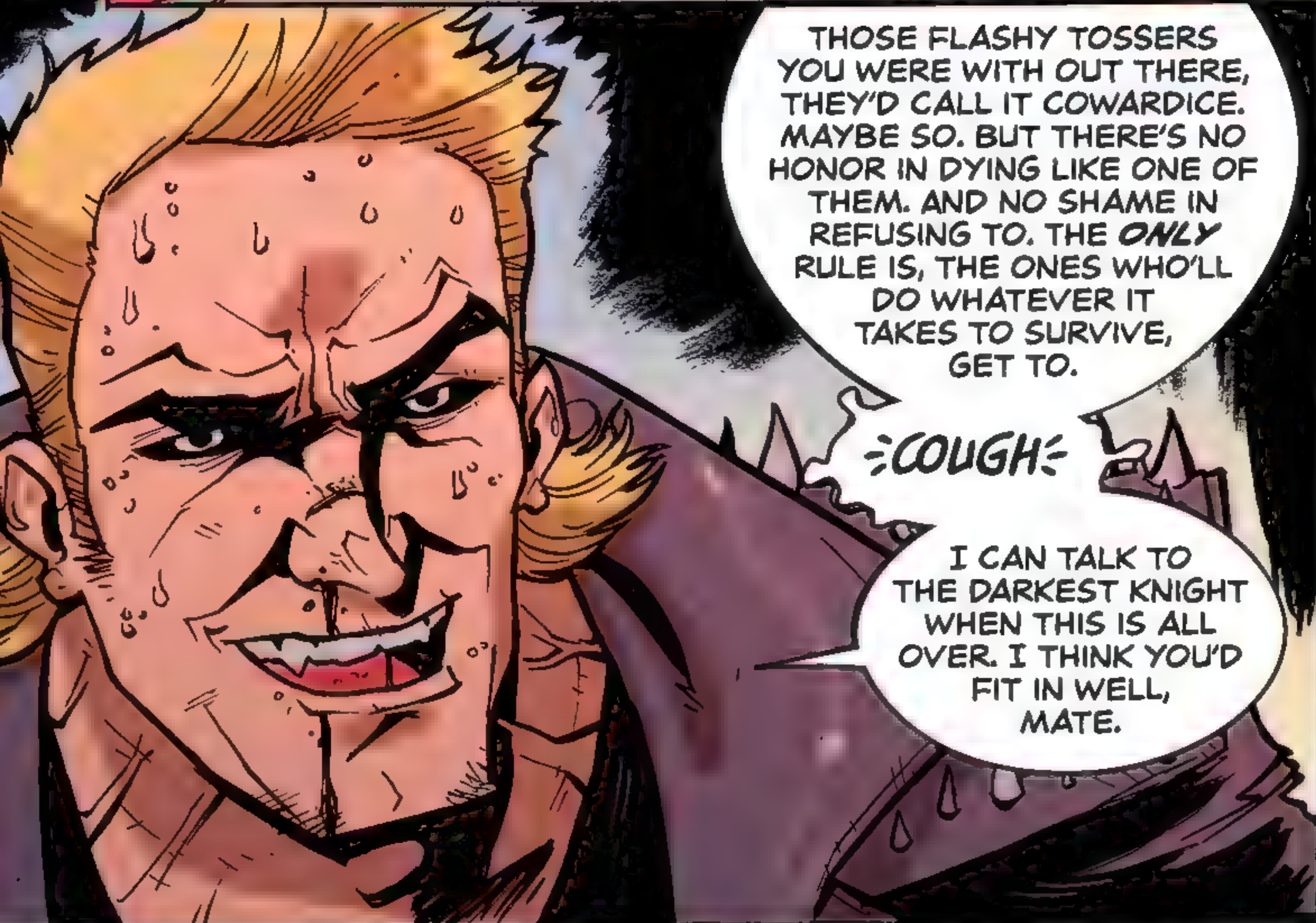
LOOK AT THAT. ANOTHER DIFFERENCE.

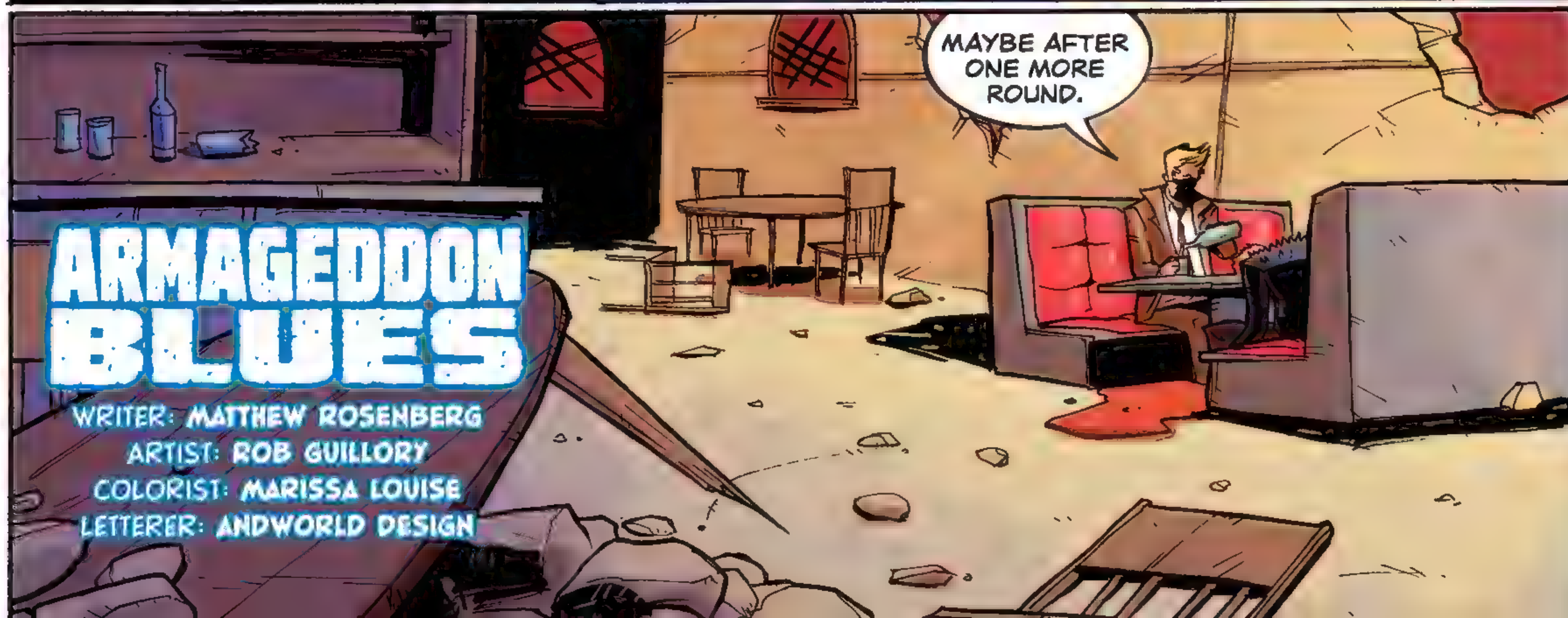
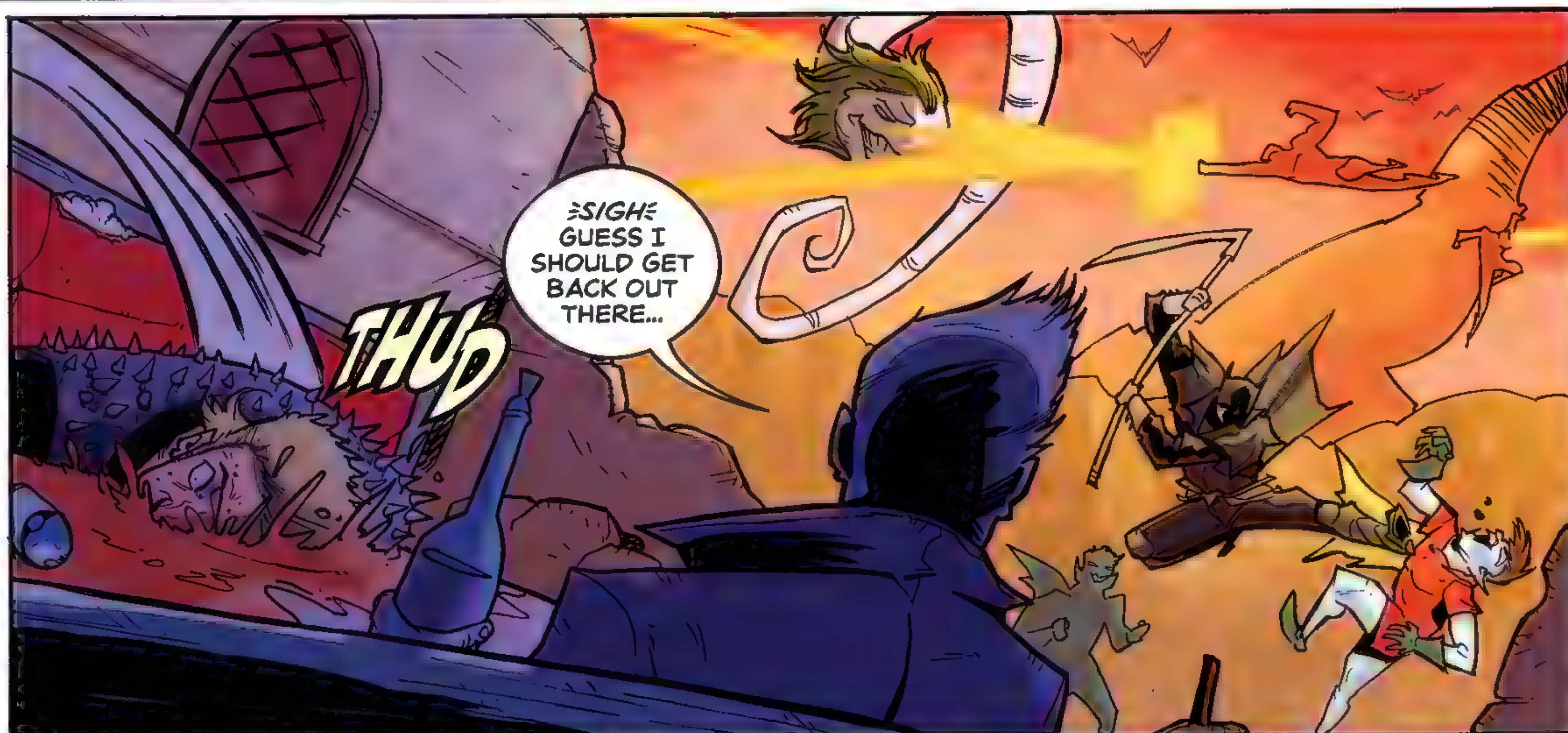


TO YOUR LIFE. IT'LL BE OVER BEFORE YOU KNOW IT.





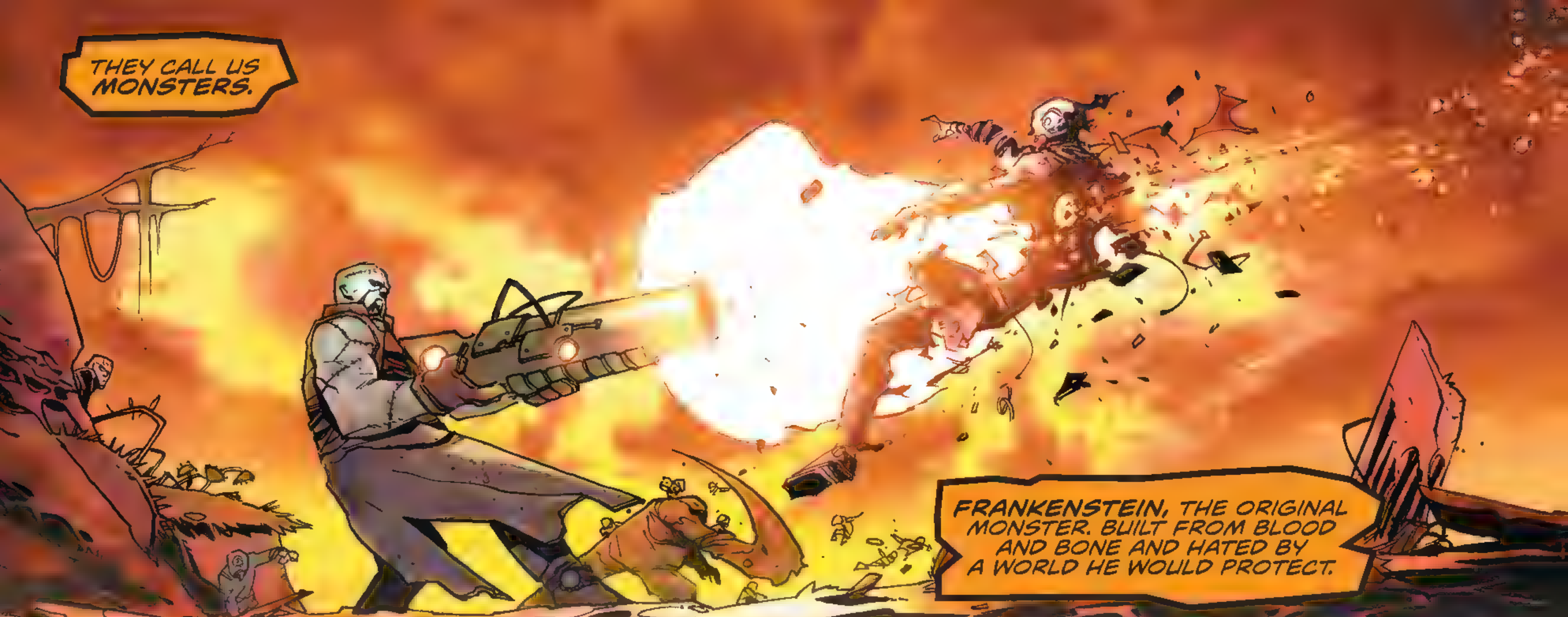




ARMAGEDDON BLUES

WRITER: MATTHEW ROSENBERG
ARTIST: ROB GUILLORY
COLORIST: MARISSA LOUISE
LETTERER: ANDWORLD DESIGN

THEY CALL US
MONSTERS.



FRANKENSTEIN, THE ORIGINAL
MONSTER. BUILT FROM BLOOD
AND BONE AND HATED BY
A WORLD HE WOULD PROTECT.

CLAYFACE,
WHO COULD BE
ANYTHING AND
EVERYTHING,
BUT UNNERVES
BY PROTEAN
DESIGN.



SOLOMON GRUNDY.
ONE WHO INTENDED
TO BE LIKE ME, BUT
FAILED NEARLY
MINDLESS IN HIS RAGE.
LIKE FRANKENSTEIN
AND CLAYFACE,
A MONSTER MADE.



BUT SOME
MONSTERS
CHOOSE.

SOME CHOOSE
WITH GOOD
INTENTIONS, LIKE
BRIMSTONE,
WHO TOOK HER
BROTHER'S
CURSE TO TRY
AND TURN THE
DARKNESS BACK.



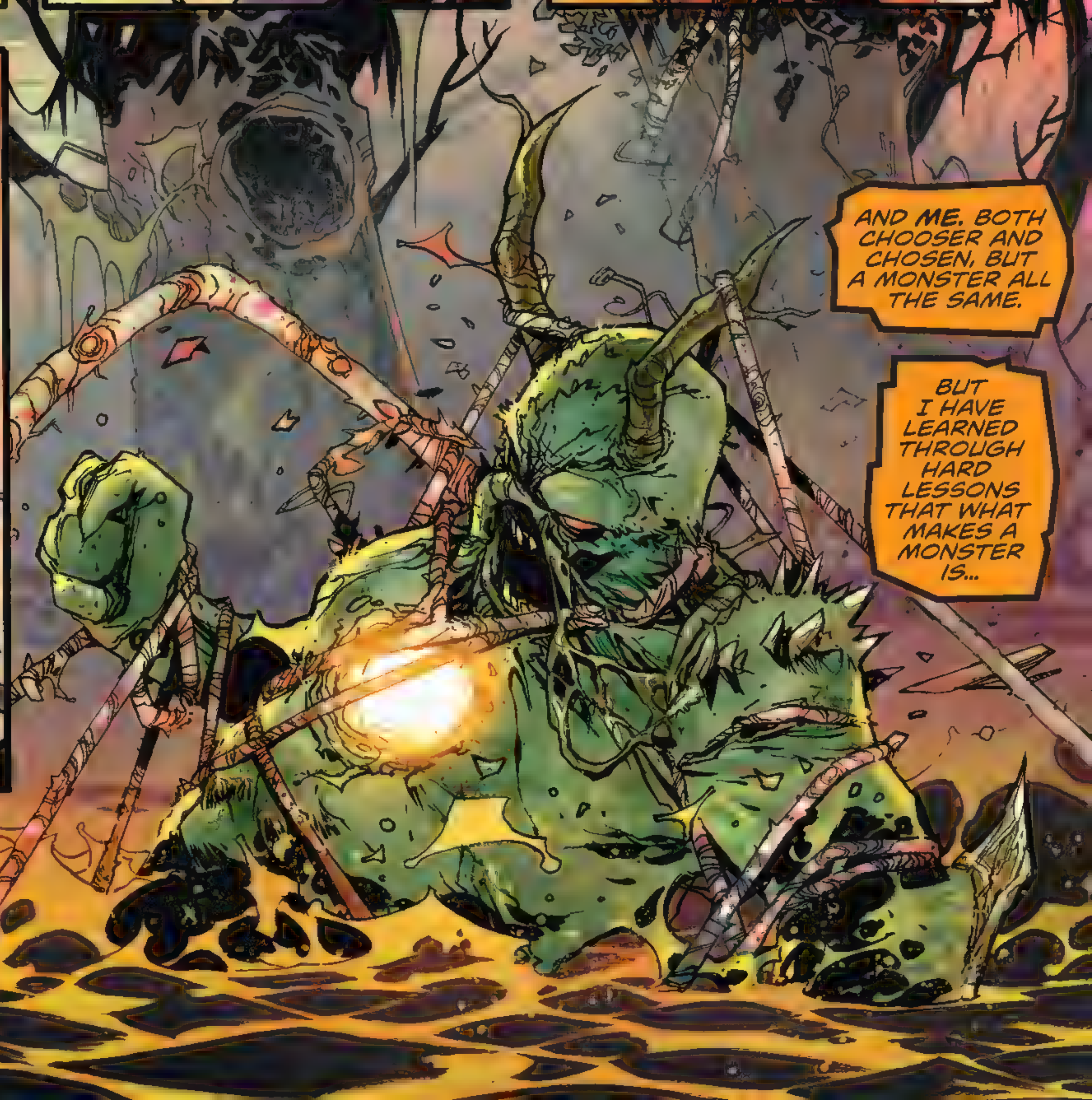
SOME ONLY BEAR ILL WILL.
ANTON ARCANE. MY ENEMY.
THE ENEMY OF ALL. A MONSTER
OF HIS OWN MAKING.

ABBY ARCANE. MY LOVE.
MY GREATEST ALLY.
NOW SOMETHING
MONSTROUS AS WELL.



AND ME. BOTH
CHOOSE AND
CHOSEN, BUT
A MONSTER ALL
THE SAME.

BUT
I HAVE
LEARNED
THROUGH
HARD
LESSONS
THAT WHAT
MAKES A
MONSTER
IS...



...CONTEXT.

THIS IS MY CONTEXT. OR, I SUPPOSE, HIS. THE MAN BURNED AWAY IN FIRE FOR THE MONSTER TO RISE. SOMETHING THAT THOUGHT IT WAS ALEC HOLLAND, BUT WAS NOT. HE LACKED MY SOUL.

BUT THERE WAS A WOMAN WHO DIDN'T CARE. ANOTHER VERSION OF HER FOR ANOTHER VERSION OF ME, OR ALMOST ME.

AND IN HIS LIFE, AS IN MINE, WOODRUE WOULD TRY TO HARNESS THE POWER OF THE GREEN, A POWER NOT HIS TO POSSESS.

IN MADNESS, HE WOULD DESTROY MUCH AND THREATEN TO DESTROY MORE.

AND AS IN MY LIFE, THIS OTHER ME STOPPED WOODRUE.

BUT NOT WITHOUT...

...SACRIFICE.

THIS IS WHERE OUR PATHS DIVERGED. MINE WAS NOT WITHOUT DIFFICULTY, BUT THERE WAS LIGHT, TOO.

HIS WAS...DARKER. HE WAS AN ELEMENTAL WHO THOUGHT HE WAS ALEC HOLLAND. BUT WITHOUT THE SOUL OF A MAN HE BECAME SOMETHING... TRULY MONSTROUS.



HE BECAME OBSESSED WITH LIFE. HE WOULD KILL DEATH. WITHOUT A SOUL, HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT LIFE TRULY MEANT, AND SO HE CREATED A PERVERSION OF IT.

BUT FIRST HE WOULD NEED TO PREPARE. FROM ARCANÉ HE BECAME ONE WITH THE ROT.



AND THEN NEXT THE RED. HE DID NOT DESTROY IT. HE SUBSLIMED IT.



THE PARLIAMENT OF TREES, THE GREEN, UNDERSTOOD WHAT HE WAS BECOMING AND TRIED TO STAND AGAINST HIM. TRIED...



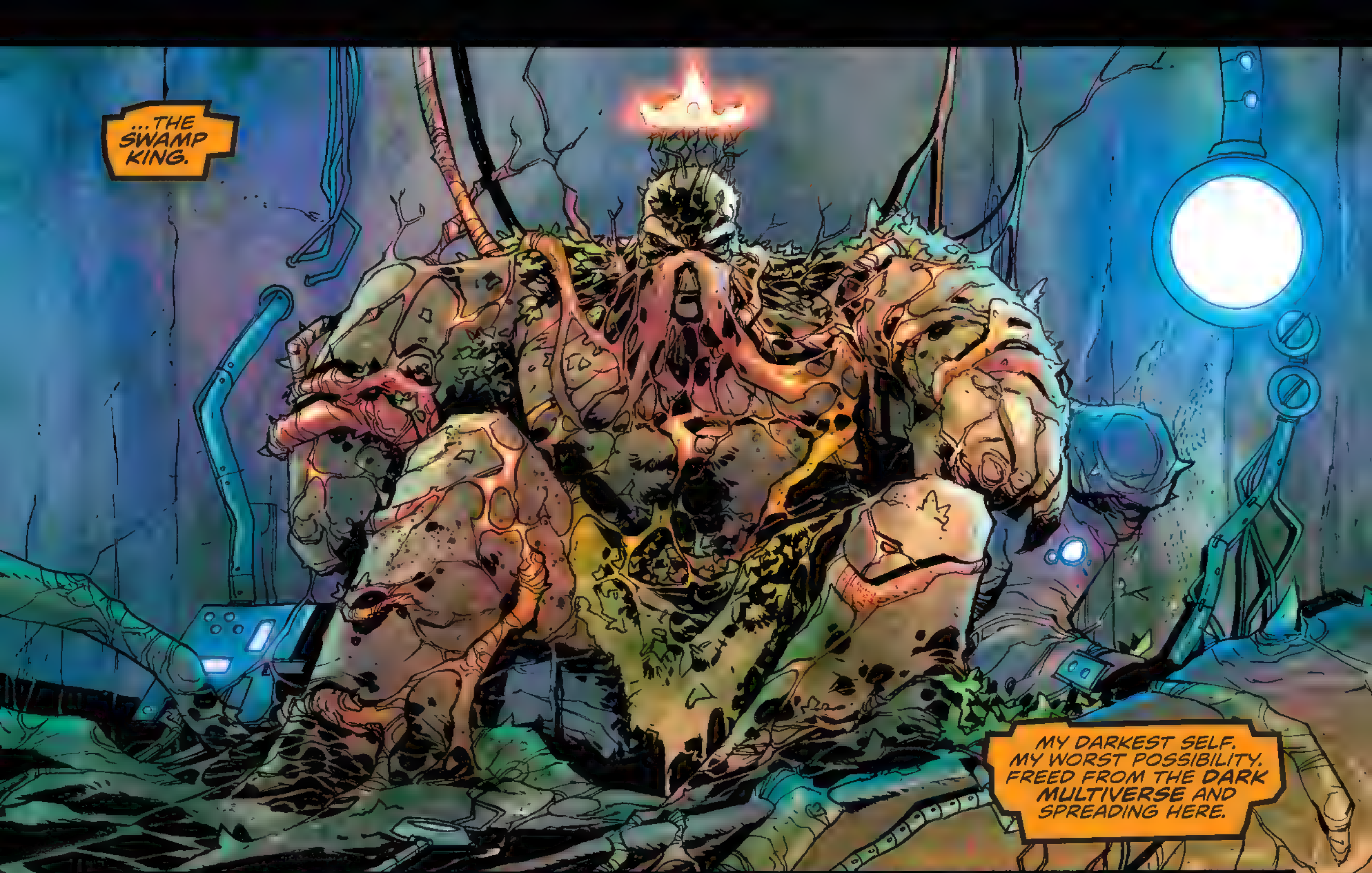
...AND FAILED.



THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT TO STOP HIM. HE WOULD BECOME ALL LIFE. A SPRING ETERNAL.



A UNIVERSE OF GREEN AND RED AND ROT RULED OVER BY...



...THE
SWAMP
KING.

MY DARKEST SELF.
MY WORST POSSIBILITY.
FREED FROM THE DARK
MULTIVERSE AND
SPREADING HERE.



BUT WE ARE NOT
WITHOUT HOPE,
DESPITE THE ODDS.



I HAVE A WEAPON
HE CANNOT
UNDERSTAND.



FRANKENSTEIN
REPRESENTED
THE RED. LIFE
TO FIGHT LIFE.

CLAYFACE,
THE MELT.

GRUNDY, ANOTHER
ASPECT OF THE GREEN.

BRIMSTONE FOR
HER CONNECTION TO
THE DARK MULTIVERSE.

ARCANE FOR THE ROT.

I KNEW THAT
EACH OF THEM,
WHILE NOT AN
ELEMENTAL, WOULD
STILL PRESENT
A DIFFICULTY THAT
THE SWAMP KING
COULD NOT
EASILY DEVOUR.

I HAD HOPED THEY
WOULD SURVIVE. BUT
THEY KNEW THE
MISSION WAS SIMPLY
TO DELIVER ME...

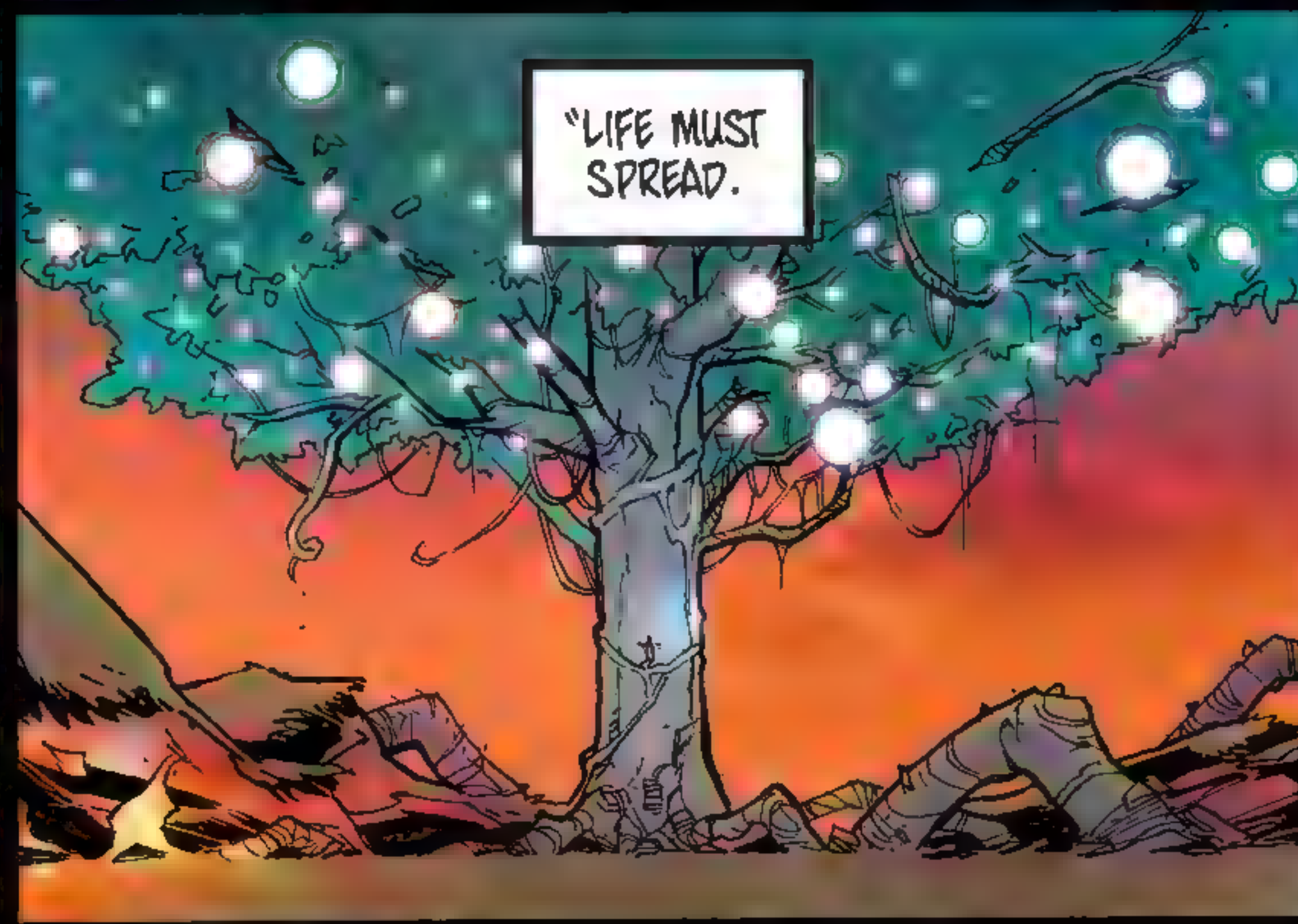


...TO HIM.

FOOL.



I HAD ALREADY CONQUERED THE ELEMENTS. DID YOU THINK THAT ALL THIS WOULD BE MORE THAN A MOMENTARY DISTRACTION?



"LIFE MUST SPREAD."



DID YOU THINK YOU COULD WIN?



I HAD HOPE...



THERE IS NO HOPE. THERE IS ONLY ME.



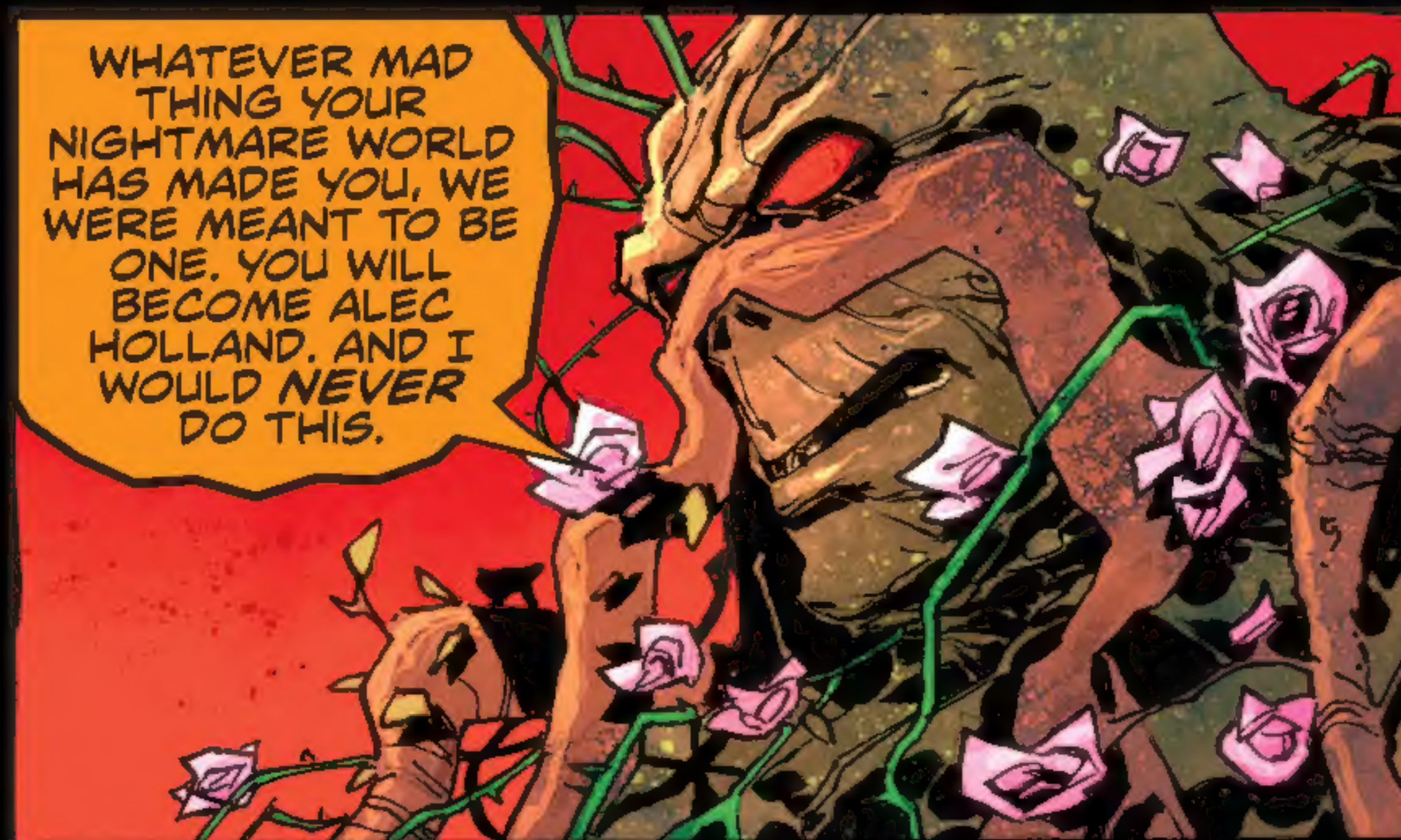
THERE IS US.

I DIDN'T COME HERE BECAUSE I AM OF WHAT WAS ONCE THE GREEN.

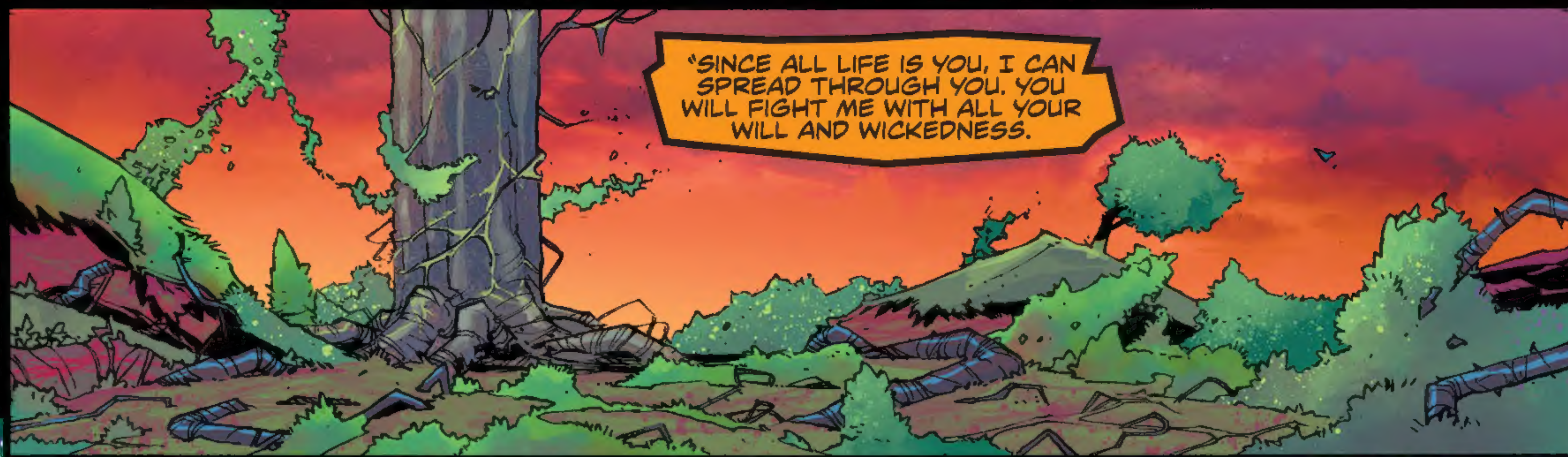


I CAME HERE BECAUSE I AM ALEC HOLLAND. YOU ARE A PLANT ELEMENTAL WHO HAS HIS MEMORIES. BUT I HAVE HIS SOUL. WHAT YOU ARE WANTS TO BECOME ME.

NO!



WHATEVER MAD THING YOUR NIGHTMARE WORLD HAS MADE YOU, WE WERE MEANT TO BE ONE. YOU WILL BECOME ALEC HOLLAND. AND I WOULD NEVER DO THIS.



"SINCE ALL LIFE IS YOU, I CAN SPREAD THROUGH YOU. YOU WILL FIGHT ME WITH ALL YOUR WILL AND WICKEDNESS.



YOU COULD EVEN WIN. BUT YOU WOULD HAVE TO DIE TO STOP ME. STRIKE US DOWN. WE WILL GO TOGETHER INTO THE BURNING DARK.

"BUT YOU WON'T. YOU CAN'T. BECAUSE THAT TOO WOULD MAKE YOU SOMETHING OTHER THAN WHAT YOU ARE.

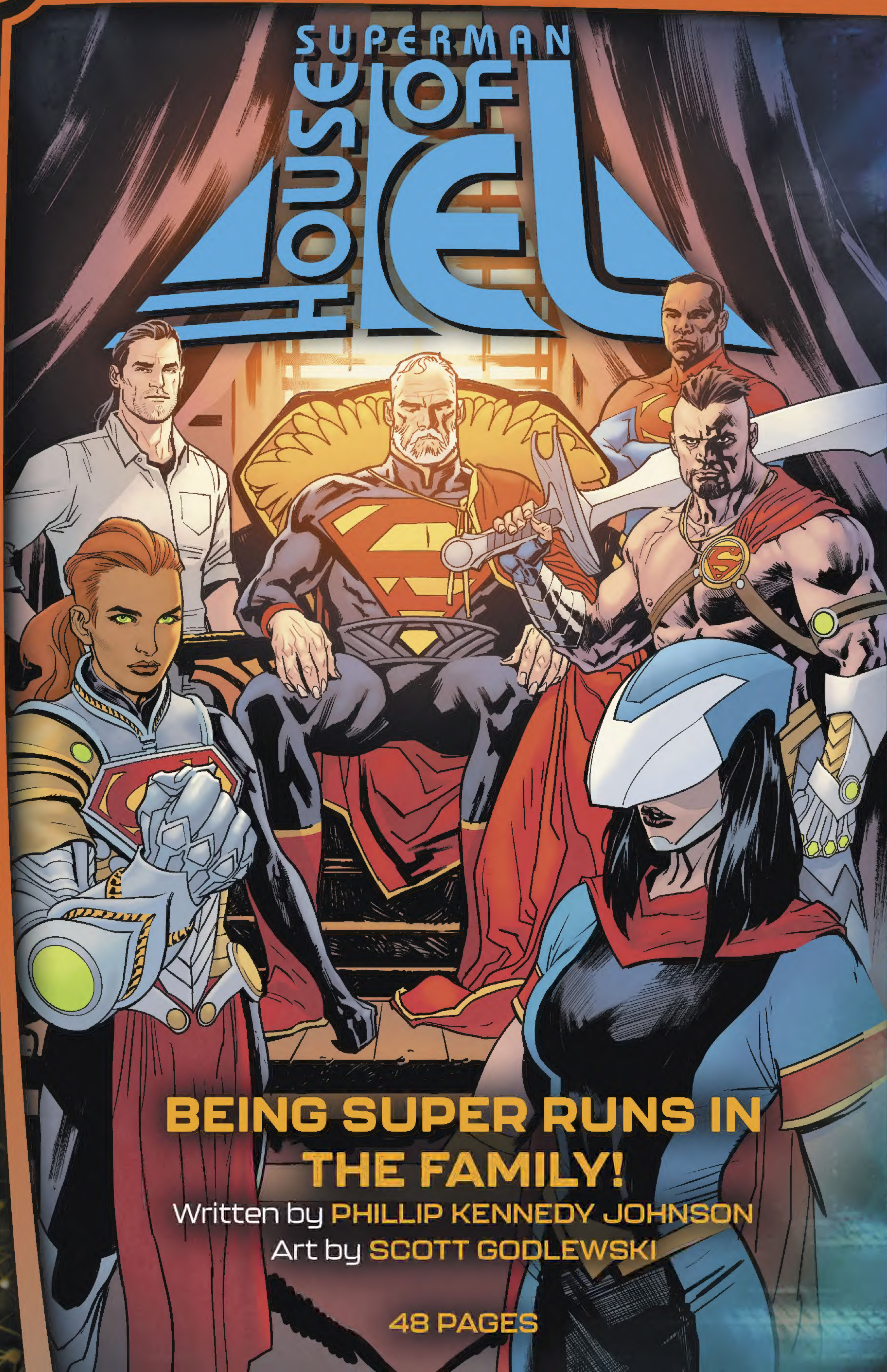
"SO YOU WILL CEASE TO BE THE MONSTER, AND YOU WILL BECOME THE MAN."

REIGN OF THE SWAMP KING

writer
Justin Jordan
artist
Mike Henderson
colorist
Adriano Lucas
letterer
Dave Sharpe



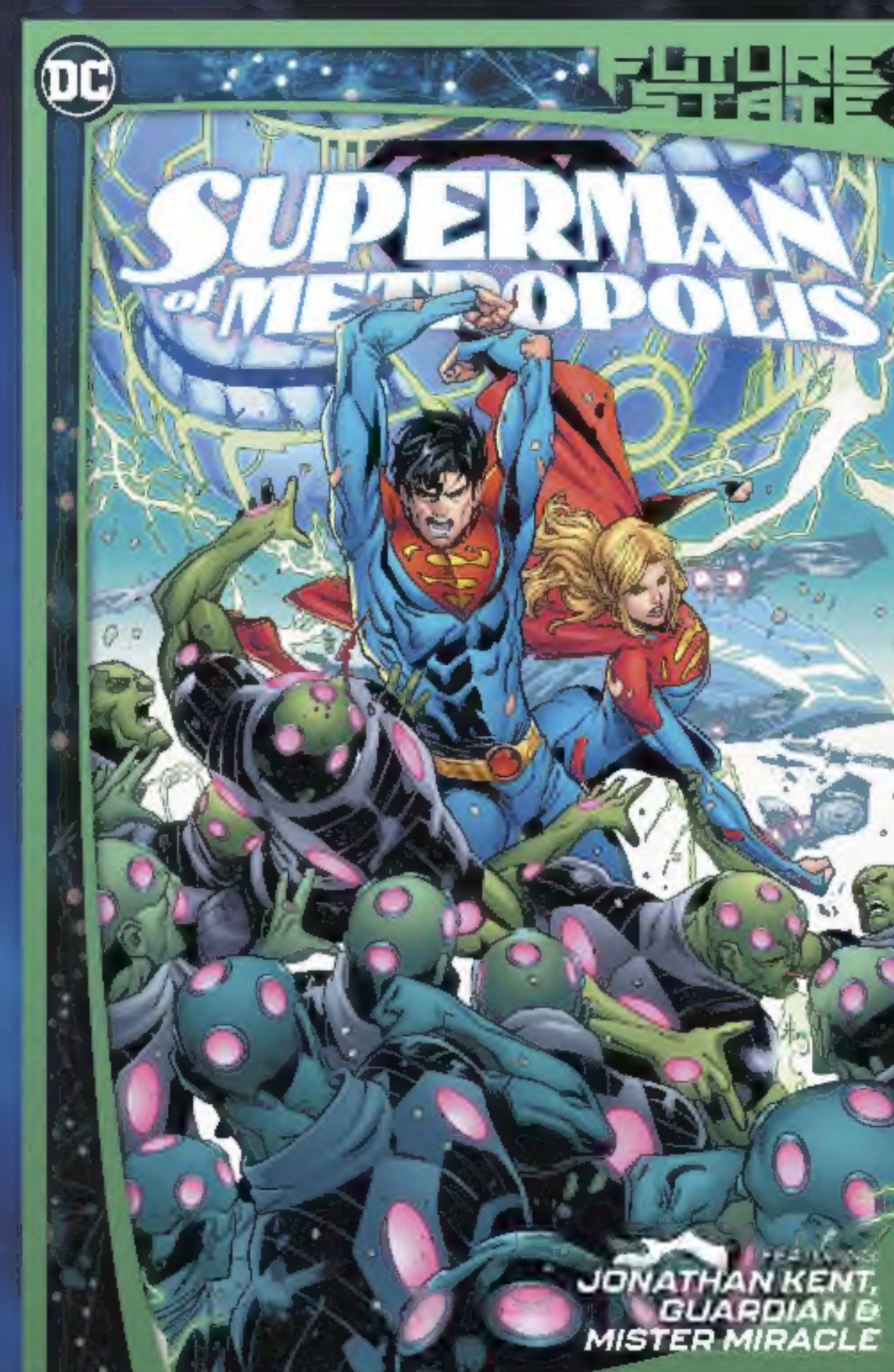
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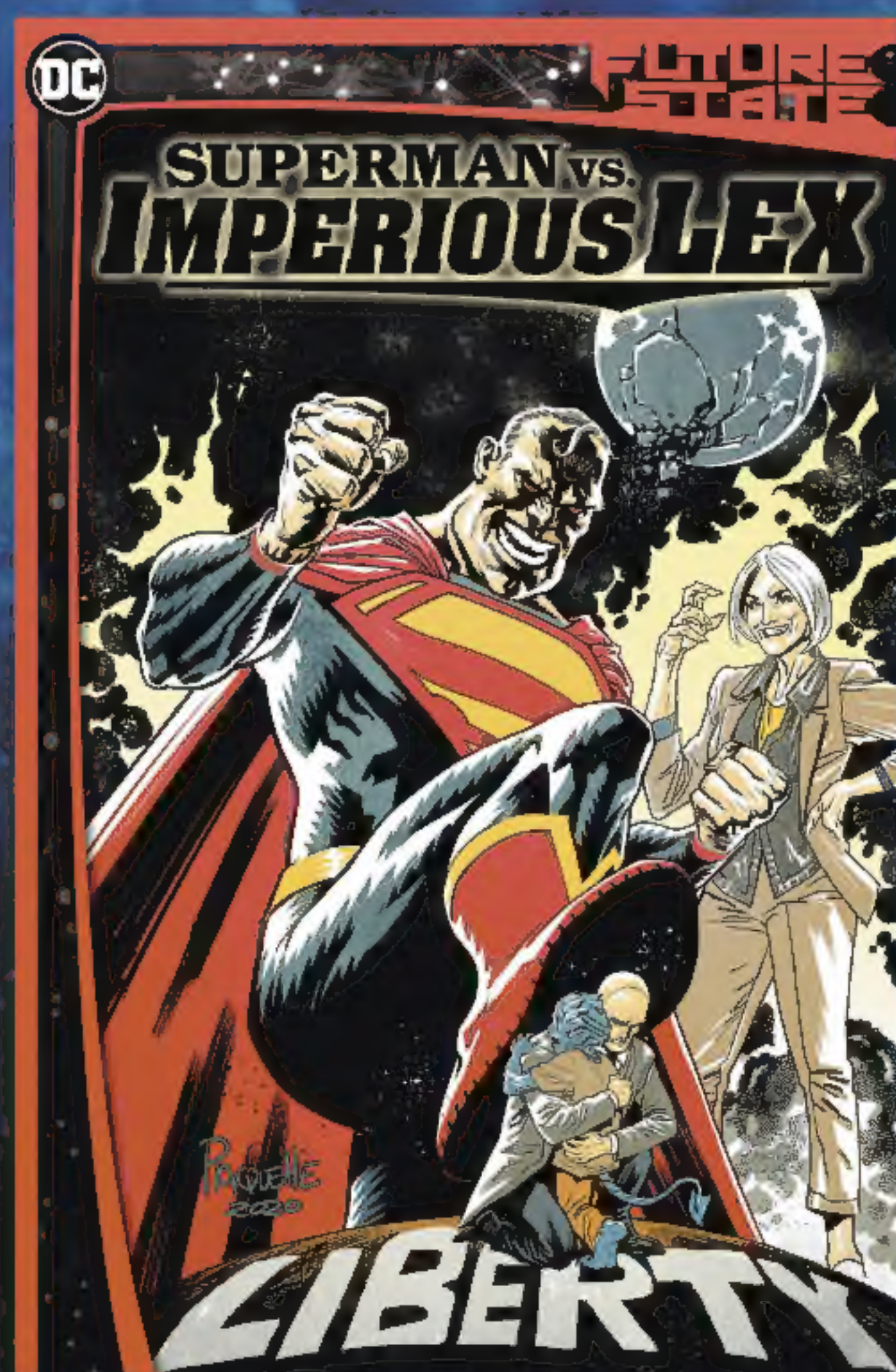
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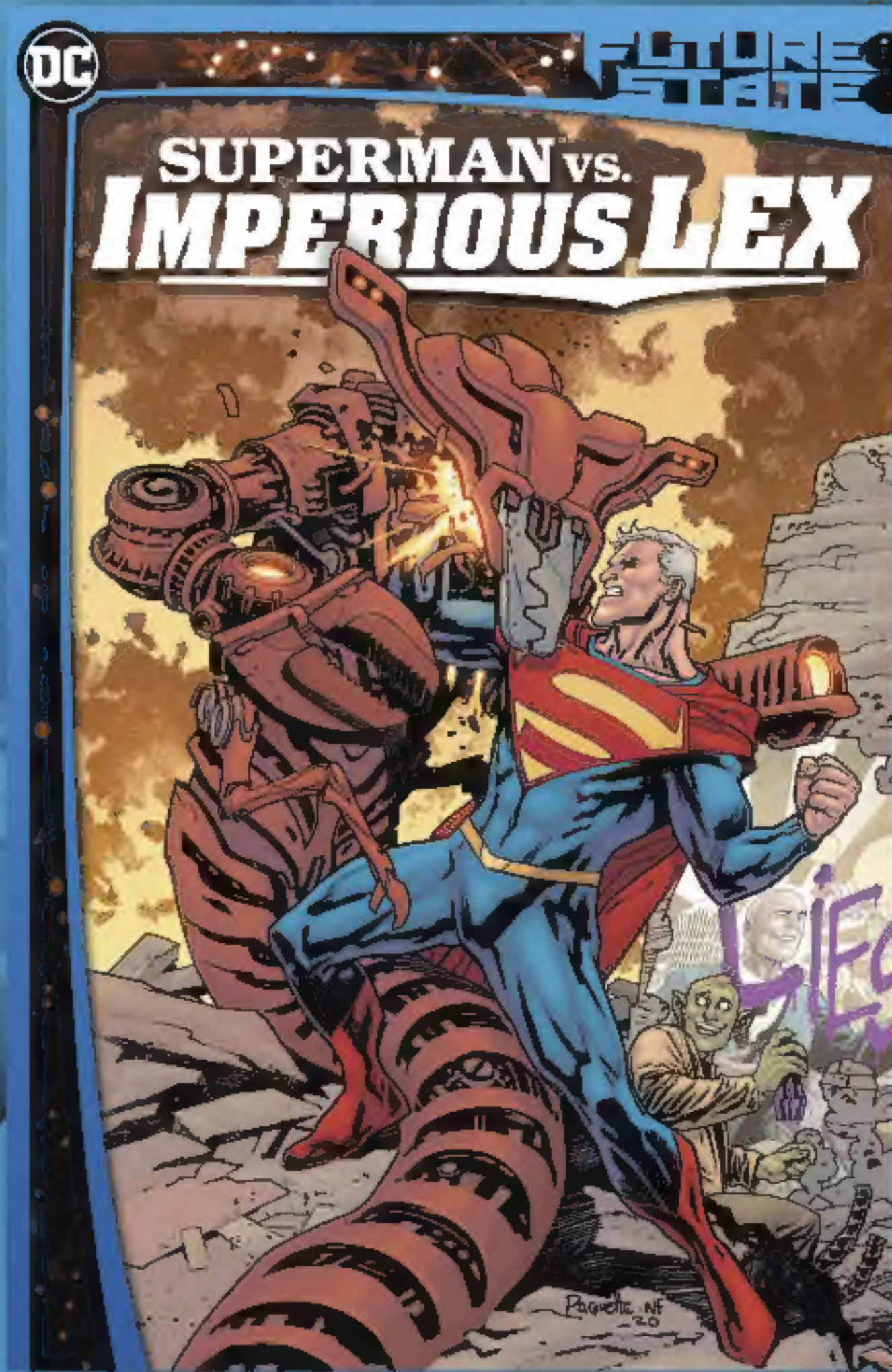
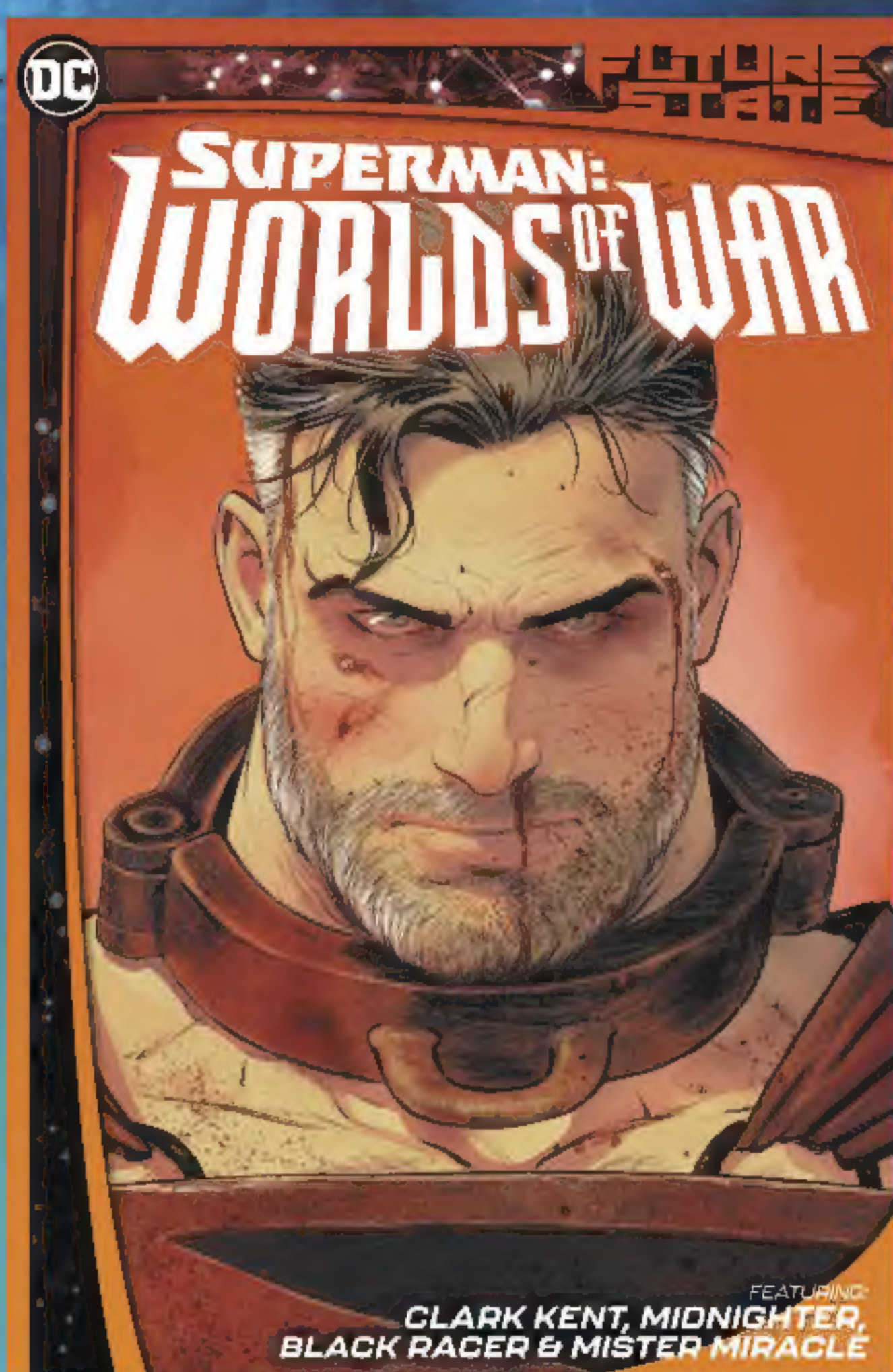
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METAL
THE
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